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**ALL AND SUNDRY**



## UNCENSORED CELEBRITIES

By E. T. RAYMOND

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*Fourth Impression.*

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# ALL & SUNDRY

BY

E. T. RAYMOND

AUTHOR OF

"UNCENSORED CELEBRITIES"

T. FISHER UNWIN, LTD.  
LONDON : ADELPHI TERRACE

*First published in 1919.*

## PREFACE

SHORTLY after the appearance of my former volume, "Uncensored Celebrities," I received a letter from a lady who earnestly advised me to quit the part of a "sort of malicious Debrett," and go in for genuine fiction, for which, she was kind enough to say, I seemed eminently qualified.

I should have suspected satire but for one fact. In their kindly and indeed generous references to my work, the public critics seemed to convey the same impression of detecting a deliberately depreciative intention on the part of the author. Now every man has his vulnerable point. Unlike Mr. Pott, I could bear being called an ungrammatical twaddler; I should reflect that English grammar is a very uncertain thing, and that twaddle is largely a matter of individual fancy. I am not in the least concerned when a very learned critic accuses me of misquoting Mr. Lorrimer; if I did so, it was with as little consciousness as M. Jourdain talked prose. But I should not like to be thought malicious.

Let me, therefore, hasten to explain that if I have examined with some coolness considerable

figures in politics and letters, it is with quite other motives than the satisfaction of a desire to deal caustically or irreverently with established reputations. What I do feel is that in this country the excessive reverence paid to the " accredited hero " is not a good but a bad thing. It means that the politician, once arrived, can do much as he chooses, which is bad for the country and not good for the politician. It means that our merchants of ideas, once well established on the bookstalls, can sell us pretty well what they like. It means that a " name," however obtained, exerts the influence that should only attach to a reality. It means, finally, that the public does not get the best out of its older men (since their second best is readily accepted), while the younger talent has a hard task in getting recognition, or even a living. And it is young talent, above all, of which the country stands most in need.

Of the sketches assembled in this volume, a number appeared in *Everyman*, and others in *The Outlook*.

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# ALL AND SUNDRY

## THE PRINCE OF WALES

"DURING those four years I found my manhood." This remark of the Prince of Wales on a recent ceremonial occasion was the subject of much obvious comment. Regarded in one light, it was a sufficiently obvious remark. The Prince went into the war a stripling; he has emerged from it a man: even to-day we consider five-and-twenty grown up. In 1914 little was known by the general public of the shy, fair-haired lad who seemed to have very little inclination to show himself to his father's lieges. In 1919 the handsome, well-set-up young Prince bears himself with a dignity and self-possession, and withal a shrewd understanding of his audience, that impress even the least impressible. It is the bearing of a man who has learned his own trade, and, therefore, can think justly of men of other trades, neither paying them too much respect nor too little. Four years spent in close touch with the sternest realities of life and death and duty count for more in the education of a Prince than years of study or even of peace soldiering and sailing. It was



once the normal apprenticeship of a ruler of men; its efficacy is clearly as great to-day.

But there was an implication in the Prince's speech which was not so generally noticed. He spoke of himself as representing in the presence of his elders the "younger generation of England." That younger generation is scarcely so respectful to the pretensions of age and experience as it might have been had things taken the course which a century free from serious war had led most people to expect. Young England thinks lightly enough of the old men who could neither ensure peace nor prepare to make war with vigour. "You got the country into this mess; we got it out; we have paid the price; we (and not you) are going to have the say in the future." Such, in effect, is what the young men are thinking, and what many of them are saying. The revolutionary sentiment is confined to no single department of human affairs. The elders were wrong in one great matter; why should they be right in any other? Above all, why should age, as age, claim to govern youth?

The revolt of the young had begun before the war. Thirty years ago Ibsen was talking of the younger generation knocking at the gate; to-day, it would seem, there is no gate to knock at. It was a revolt partly against the inequity of things, but chiefly, perhaps, against their dulness. And

it is not altogether fanciful to attribute that dulness to the reign of the old, and to explain in turn the reign of the old by the reign of German ideas. Youth went out of the world with the fall of Napoleon. Before Waterloo youth commanded armies, built and administered Empires, ruled Cabinets, wrote great literature. Clive, Wolfe, and the younger Pitt had made themselves immortal at an age when the average professional man of yesterday was still waiting for a brief or a patient. Doubtless the change is partly explained by the growing complexity of things. But much, undeniably, is also due to the exaltation of what is called "organisation," and organisation in this sense and in this degree was a specially German thing. It was the weapon of a mind unable to trust to its intuitions, a mind patient of any labour, impervious to the disgust which a monotonous task creates in a quick brain, but easily baffled and confused by emergency. To do things in the German way the chief qualification is experience, and though experience does not necessarily go with age, age is essential to experience. During the nineteenth century all the world, America apart, did things in the German way—for the most part like a bad translation. Age everywhere dominated the public services, and to a large extent it controlled private enterprise. Matters even went to the

length of preferring the dead lion to the living dog. Japanese history records that after the death of the great Hideyoshi, while he was engaged in the conquest of Korea, his body, cunningly embalmed and dressed in the habiliments of war, was placed on horseback and marched for many months with the troops, in order that neither they nor the enemy should be aware that the moving spirit of the enterprise had departed. In the same way, during the Victorian time, the tendency was to pay more and more respect to names; the fame of having done something once was largely accepted as a guarantee of present competence. Even an actor duly certificated to have been funny in the sixties was dutifully regarded in the eighties, however obsolete and decrepit, as a comic genius; while the hero of some small gunboat exploit before Alexandria achieved a hold on the public imagination superior to that of Cochrane and perhaps second only to that of Nelson. Respect for names, more than anything else, was responsible for Gordon dying uselessly at Khartum, and Gladstone labouring without result at Westminster. Greybeards with a memorable past snored in the Cabinet, fell asleep on railway boards, scornfully refuted criticisms at shareholders' meetings, and even dominated the hunting-field. In politics and business alike the man of forty was considered dangerously young.

At the beginning of the war age still kept its prestige. If one grandfather proved obviously unequal to his task, the cry went up for another grandfather; it was long before it occurred to anybody that an inexhaustible reservoir of energy and ability existed in the mass of nameless young men conceived only as food for powder. At last the cult of the greybeard was shattered, and we are now on a wave of reaction of which no man can foresee the ultimate result. The young man, if he conquers, may bring about a very queer world—queer, that is, to our fageyish notions, though probably not nearly so absurd inherently as the world of yesterday. It will not be, I fancy, a world after the notions of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb. That is a distinctly middle-aged vision. The young man has no fancy for living in a rabbit hutch, even with due provision of bran and sow-thistle. He will plunge feverishly into all the mechanical part of the world of Mr. H. G. Wells; the romance of machinery possesses him. But he will care very little about Mr. Wells's earthly Paradise, and nothing whatever about Mr. Wells's "Invisible King." On the other hand, he may very well make hay of much that Mr. Wells's ineffective scythe has threatened. For how much of the very warp and woof of European tradition during the last century is merely sublimated fageyism? The young have

acquiesced, because there seemed no clear alternative, so crushing was the weight of the half-dead hand. But they acquiesced grumblingly. Internally they rejected the standards prescribed for them in politics, economics, art, and religion, and now they have the power to reshape the world they will doubtless do the thing thoroughly.

It is a great opportunity; radical change could only come in some such way, through the insurgence of men and women still unbroken to routine. But if it is an opportunity, it is also a danger; and it is well that at this time there has grown into manhood a Prince who really does represent the younger generation, who knows how it feels about the present and future, who shares its interest in the new mechanical marvels, its eager envisagement of a more expanded life, its scorn for much that was obsolete and effete, but who also represents the older generation, and must feel in his bones the insanity of too abrupt a break with the past, much as he appreciates the necessity of rational advance.

In one way it is by a return to the past that the Prince is best serving an extremely modern English need—that of a leadership, the more real because it is spiritual rather than mechanical, independent of the vagaries of votes. It is his great opportunity to restore to monarchy something it has lacked for the last two centuries or

more. We misunderstand much in English history when we lay all the stress on the Treaty of Dover and none on Charles II. feeding the ducks in St. James's Park. The successors of Charles signed no secret compacts. But they fed no ducks. They carried out their contract, and consumed their wages, but they had neither the inclination nor the capacity to win for their office the veneration, or for their persons the affection, of the mass of the common people. The Crown became one of the official posts. The levée, from being an essentially human thing, rose (or sank) into a solemnity. There was a greater distance between the Crown and the classes and an additional gulf between the classes and the people. It is, perhaps, not fanciful to attribute something of the character of modern industrialism to that great disturbance of the balance of English life which dates from the moment that Dutch troops mounted guard in Whitehall.

It is hard to create a legend. It is even harder to revive one. Yet that is the task the Prince of Wales, probably quite unconsciously, is attempting. It is his splendid business to complete the valuable work of his father and grandfather, and to bring back the good that departed, amid much evil, when the last Stuart packed his trunks. He has everything to help him, and not least the fact that no Baron Stockmar presided over his educa-

tion. For he is all English, and, while the Army has given him his manhood, his boyhood was never killed by heavy tutors. Those who watch him closely in public feel that behind the mask there is a very lively sense of humour, and no too oppressive respect for the formalities that hedge princes.

## MARSHAL FOCH AND MARSHAL WILSON

THAT shyness of the Englishman which makes him in foreign company a piece of awkwardness entirely surrounded by good form is curiously illustrated in our military history. We have fought many Continental wars; we have had all sorts of Continental allies, by whom we have done generally more than our duty. But I know hardly an instance of warm and enduring friendship between a great English soldier and a foreigner co-operating with him. Marlborough "got on" well with Eugene; but Marlborough got on with all men who did not want to borrow sixpence; no man better understood the art of getting on in all its branches and all its senses. But of anything resembling affection there was none between these great collaborators. Wellington, again, got on with regular Prussian savages as well as with savage Spanish irregulars; but we know exactly how much love was lost between him and Blücher.

But for a happy accident the late war would have afforded no exception to the rule. Between most French and British generals relations were correct. Between some they were, like the Scots-



man's change, only just correct. Only in the case of Ferdinand Foch and Henry Wilson is to be found the kind of liking which breaks down all barriers of race, language, tradition, and religion. Yet no two men could be less alike. Their physical differences well typify the other contrasts. Foch, short and stocky, is essentially the Latin of the South; Wilson, looking, with his gauntness, even more than his great height, only wants a winged helmet to suggest some gnarled Viking giant in perfect training. Foch is a Catholic, in whom devotion to his faith assumes the violence of a passion. The other is an Ulsterman in politics and religion—need more be said? Foch saw the light in that sunny old city of Tarbes which has acknowledged French, Spanish, and English conquerors. Wilson was born in Ireland, married in Ireland, and remains as Irish as man can well be. Foch has the poise of a natural diplomatist; Wilson will always make an enemy rather than refrain from making a good point. His candour, indeed, is sometimes embarrassing and often quite unnecessary. It was his honesty or his indiscretion, call it what you will, that prevented his playing in the early stages of the war the part appropriate to his great abilities. It has been said he "intrigued" in the Ulster affair, but intrigue implies secrecy, and Sir Henry called his co-conspirators into a

circle with a megaphone. Nothing need be said here about the propriety or otherwise of his conduct at this time. But if it was reprehensible, it was not mean. He did not stab in the dark. But he did most openly oppose Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Asquith never forgave him. Mr. Asquith could not or would not understand that, as Madame Dubarry said about morality, *tout ça est si purement géographique*, and that things mattering very much at the Curragh mattered nothing at St. Omer.

Foch and Wilson, then, are very different men. But both have qualities in common which explain a friendship far transcending the limits usual in this country. They are not only friends; they are the gayest of comrades, who will exchange caps and dance the Can-can together with the abandon of two students of the Quartier Latin. Both are men of extraordinary courage: men whose spirits rise with emergency, and who are never quite so gaily defiant, so completely masters of themselves, as when thoroughly cornered. "I am outnumbered, out-equipped, inferior in moral, without reserves: bon, j'attaque," is the typical attitude of Foch; Wilson is equally audacious and cheerful amid daunting difficulties. With both the most complicated ideas find the clearest and most articulate expression. Foch has in a quite special sense the French faculty of finding the

just word for the precise thought. He sees things like lightning, and, never deceiving himself, he cannot bewilder others. Every order of his is sun-clear. His military lectures were miracles of lucidity. Such power as his of seeing every part in due relation to the whole belongs only to the highest genius. No general ever had a greater command of detail; none was ever more resolved not to let detail command him. He has never been without time for lunch, or for the word of praise to the meanest who has earned it. A happy touch of true French scepticism is not wanting. According to all German rules, he should have lacked "objectivity"; he should have been led astray by the tyranny of his emotions, while the iron men of the Moltke tradition envisaged each problem with the icy detachment of pure intellectualism. Instead, while German commanders consistently let wishes father thoughts, Ferdinand Foch, to the last minute of the war, remained master equally of his ardent and indomitable heart, and his cool and ironic head.

To the friendship on equal terms of such a man the passport must be countersigned by high intelligence. Sir Henry Wilson's very remarkable intellect was the first quality that ensured him the interest of Foch. The two men were thrown much together in the days before the war. Sir Henry Wilson's work in co-ordinating plans to

meet the emergency which actually befell is little known to the public. But it was of the highest possible importance. As Commandant of the Staff College, he exercised a great influence on the improvement of British Staff work. As Director of Military Operations during the four years preceding the war he took a principal share in bringing the arrangements for the Expeditionary Force to that marvellous pitch of perfection which astounded the most competent and least friendly critics, the German Great General Staff. To him, especially, we owe the establishment of intimate relations with the French Army allowing of the closest co-operation. For this task General Wilson was exceptionally qualified. In the first place, he was not merely alive to the danger; he was possessed with the consciousness of it; Hannibal was not more convinced of his mission. Secondly, he had a most unusual understanding of the French character, and a still more unusual faith in the strength underlying all its superficial infirmities. The surprise of the "new France" was none to him; he knew the old France too well to overrate the accident of 1870. Thirdly, he spoke French really well, and knew France like his own country. But above all the way of the man was an asset of supreme importance. To the French he was wholly *bon type*. Before his humour, his dash, his kindliness, the shrewd

judgment concealed beneath his good-nature, the wit that appealed to a people tolerant of anything but dulness, difficulties melted away that might well have proved insuperable to some General John Bull, K.C.B., with his conscientious brains of wool and his faultless manners of ice. Wilson soon came to stand, in French eyes, for Great Britain—for a reformed Great Britain, quite distinct from the old Albion of milords and Punic faith. The British Army attained a new unofficial title. It was "*l'armée double-iou.*"

It was during this time that the foundation was laid of that friendship between the Marshal and the General which was afterwards to prove so fertile. But it was long before the two friends came together. Politics kept in comparative inactivity the one man of commanding genius in the French Army and perhaps the most original mind at the disposal of Great Britain. In breaking at once the taboo in France M. Clemenceau rendered the Alliance the greatest of all his services. In deciding, after much opposition, to break it in England, Mr. Lloyd George added the little more that is so much. Foch at least will never minimise the difference between a co-worker who anticipated and co-workers who acquiesced.

## PRESIDENT WILSON

EVERY reader of romance knows that discouraging part of the story when the Unknown Knight is liquidated as a mystery, and not yet re-established as a going concern of human interest. We seem to have arrived at something like the same stage in the history of that very able and powerful personage who is for the moment head of the singular form of monarchy known as the United States of America.

President Wilson has not changed, but he seems changed, not so much because we see him from a different angle, as because we see him in a different atmosphere. Prospero is Prospero still, but his "so potent art" is no longer exerted to shake "the strong-based promontory," and "by the spurs pluck up the pine and cedar"; Prospero instead is busied in the practical politics of Milan and Naples—on the whole, rather a descent for Prospero. Up to the Armistice President Wilson was a sort of Jupiter in his remote Olympus. He was not "careless of mankind"; mankind has never had a more conscientious guardian. But he did seem to survey

mankind from a height, and contrived to let mankind know it. In going to Paris, however, Mr. Wilson came flat-footed to earth, and thereafter rather resembled Jupiter when he condescended to engage in the contentions of mortals; tripping up one hero, seizing the heel of another, shielding a third with his buckler, or invoking a general fog to cover the retreat of a fourth. It is inevitable that in such a rough-and-tumble Jupiter must lose some morsel of his majesty. Olympus has no doubt its points as a place of residence, but it has one conspicuous disadvantage: one cannot go away for a change without people talking. A single week-end at the seaside will compromise your reputation as a divinity.

It is, however, merely an inverted compliment to say that Mr. Wilson, as a practical negotiator, has perhaps rather impaired the impression he made as the eloquent prophet of a new international dispensation. He attained such a height that some declension was doubtless inevitable. His position, of course, favoured him. He had leisure, even after he had led his country to its destined part in the great crusade, to act the part of spiritual munition-maker for the Allies. Unlike European statesmen, his vision was free from the immediate smoke and dust of the battlefield; his brain was not inflamed; his heart responded to emotions sincere enough, but neces-

sarily weak in comparison with those that affected men who had lived four years in hell. Thus it was his natural no less than his splendid part to hold up in a world gone mad and lawless the sacred Labarum of the legality and the brotherhood of man. To his lips came without effort the great platitudes which seem the cruellest paradox in such times, and it was well for the world that the man most free to think without passion was also a man so supremely qualified to think with justice. He may have seemed to some a thought too liberal. He may have appeared occasionally to approach too nearly for weak man that superhuman tolerance which looks as kindly on the appetite of the wolf as on the innocence of the lamb. But, given the point of view, it could hardly have been better expressed than by Mr. Wilson. When he declared for a neutrality not only in act and form, but in word and even in thought; when he brushed aside all considerations of wounded national and personal pride as nothing in the scale against the chance of America being able to fulfil her mission of "uniting mankind"; when he opposed only his moral sense and his typewriter to the armed Apollyon of Berlin; when, finally, he declared for "force to the utmost" against an unteachable and incorrigible Germany—through all that long Odyssey of argument Mr. Wilson carried the idiom of



statesmanship to a level of lofty and impressive eloquence perhaps never so consistently maintained.

One or two mistakes, of course, he made. There was a shrill, querulous, and altogether earthy tone about one or two of his blockade expostulations to Great Britain that presented rather a jarring contrast with the high note of moral conviction in his appeals to the "great Government" of Imperial Germany. And above all, there was that quite horrid solecism of "too proud to fight"—the quaintest error, surely, ever made by a man of first-class intelligence. The best comment on the lapse of the great American was American. On the New Jersey seaboard at the time there happened to be a plague of sharks, and a cruel wit described the natives as "too proud to bathe." It is the kind of phrase of which men die politically; that Mr. Wilson lived despite it is proof enough, if any were needed, of his real strength.

I should not recall the phrase here, but that it does seem to illustrate the one weakness of an indubitably great man—a weakness which may yet prevent him wholly fulfilling the purpose to which he is devoted. I may, perhaps, best illustrate what I mean by a quotation:

"His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up,  
And say to all the world, This was a man."

The important word in this noble eulogy is "mixed." It is possible, say the men of science, to produce separately by chemical means every constituent of a glass of vintage port. The one thing science cannot do is to mix them so as to make a glass of port: put them together, and only a nauseous mess results. Some gifted human beings are as mysteriously deficient. There is a type of man who possesses most of the qualities of greatness, but lacks the one quality of all—the mysterious force that fuses them into a living whole. The Italian Eclectic school of painting illustrated this imperfect synthesis. It aimed at perfection by the apparently rational plan of combining all possible perfections. It strove at once for the fire of Michel Angelo, for the design of the Roman school, for the glowing colour of Lombardy, the action and light and shade of the Venetians, for Correggio's grace and the symmetry of Raphael. It failed. The Caracci were no doubt great painters, but leagues behind the greatest. Is it altogether fanciful to see in President Wilson something of this imperfect aggregation of perfections, an example of what we may call the synthetic man—a sort of antipodes of the monster in "Jekyll and Hyde": compact of all the virtues instead of all the vices, and yet, like Hyde, not quite human, because incomplete?

It is true that he has many wholly human attributes. He plays golf with resolute inexperience. He sings glees with determination. He tells excellent stories, and will even listen to the stories of others. He once composed a Limerick on the subject of his masterful and adventurous nose—and gave it to the reporters. He sometimes “receives” in white flannel trousers, but is so far human (and Presidential) that he would very probably object if an ambassador called on him in garb that was not “protocol.” Even at Princetown he was the least donnish of dons. When he taught a girls’ school the girls appear to have been interested in him, or at least in his moustache—which (on discovering the fact) he promptly sacrificed in the interests of higher female culture. He himself has protested against the legend that grew round him in his neutral days—that legend of a combined typewriter and calculating machine. His constant embarrassment, he says, is to restrain his emotions; he feels himself often “a far from extinct volcano.”

All this is no doubt true; it is also true that on certain great subjects no living statesman can express more exactly the feelings and aspirations of the plain ordinary man. But it is equally just to say that in other directions a quite small allowance of average human nature would enable the President to avoid grave errors of judgment.

The late Mr. Roosevelt, for example, could not, with Mr. Wilson's patient skill, have stripped Germany's case of one fallacy after another, as one peels an artichoke, till no shred of it remained. But Mr. Roosevelt would not have tried; he knew from the first, on instinct, that Germany had no case; he smelt across the Atlantic the smoke of Louvain and the taint of civilian carnage, and that was enough. Mr. Roosevelt was keenly alive to the necessity of consulting American prejudices and flattering American *amour propre*. But Mr. Roosevelt would have been moved by instinct, if by nothing else, from emphasising the fact that of 798 American soldiers lost at sea, 750 went down with a British transport, while omitting the other quite relevant fact that by far the greater part of the whole two millions travelled safely in British bottoms. Finally, Mr. Roosevelt, a very human type, had many enemies, but also hosts of friends who felt for him as Bardolph for Falstaff — "would I were with him," whether in office or elsewhere. Mr. Wilson does not inspire that warm personal loyalty. He is respected by all, feared by some, perhaps disliked by not a few. But, while no man speaks more about the people, none could well have fewer points of contact with the people. Louis XI. was hardly narrower in his circle of confidants.

In some ways this temperament is well suited

to the task of a reconciler of mankind. It is above the smaller prejudices and jealousies. But it was seen at its best when the main question was the statement of first principles. It was perhaps less happily adapted to the adjustment of the myriad of important details. As "mouthpiece of universal democracy," dealing with pure ideas, President Wilson was without doubt a shining success. It is still too early for a reasoned estimate of his stature as a practical statesman dealing with questions in which body and soul are both concerned. But one feels just a little like one does on taking tea with a Bishop after he has delivered his charge. The lawn sleeves are no longer there, and the gaiters are very visible; one is conscious of the fallible human being, the more conscious because of the veneration lately felt for him in his pontifical character. Bishops ought never to take tea, or to forsake splendid generalities.

## VISCOUNT HARCOURT \*

THE House of Lords is in the main a place of sepulture, but it permits of occasional resurrections. Those who saw Mr. Lewis Harcourt "quietly inurned" in the last month of 1916 should, therefore, be prepared to see the "ponderous and marble jaws" of his resting-place open at any appropriate moment. For despite his apparent lifelessness, he is, in fact, no more reposeful than Hamlet's parent, and perhaps, as in the case of that very human ghost, purgatorial fires have not yet disposed of the instinct of retaliation.

To pursue the metaphor, Viscount Harcourt is likely to take much the same line as the vanished Majesty of Denmark. It is his nature to work by suggestion, and, while causing a vague uneasiness, to reveal himself only at his own time and to the right person. But, like the ghost, he can talk to excellent purpose on occasion, and determine the play without taking much part in it. One cannot decently apostrophise so dignified a phantom as "old mole"; but there is just a

suggestion of the mole in Viscount Harcourt. He is an expert in tunnelling, and yet no dirt ever clings to him. Lord Rosebery is said to have remarked that "young Lewis Harcourt upset his apple-cart"; and common rumour said much the same thing. "Lulu" was the most filial of sons. He revered Sir William, and founded himself upon that great man, much as the younger Chamberlain founded himself on the elder. He believed Sir William to have been badly treated; he had great faith in Sir William's Liberalism and little in Lord Rosebery's; nothing more natural than that he should exercise at Lord Rosebery's expense those talents which he possessed, even at a tender age, in a rather unusual degree. Yet his character was in no way prejudiced by the suspicion of having politically assassinated an Earl. His moral stature remained in strict correspondence with his stately physical figure; and, with better founded confidence than Mr. Zephaniah Scadder, he could display his white and jewelled fingers to all and sundry with the challenge: "Feel my hands, young man; air they clean or air they dirty?"

To such a query only one reply was ever possible. Those aristocratic extremities were pure as the driven snow, from the shirt-cuff of white samite, mystic, wonderful, to the carefully pared finger nails, pink with Norman blood. Lord

Harcourt is an intriguer to the marrow of his bones, but a well-bred intriguer; of such was the Kingdom of the Whig Heaven. He plays the game like a gentleman, because it really is to him a gentleman's game. He delights in "tricks"; but from the first trick to the last they must be got by skill, and memory of what cards are out. Not by cheating. As Miss Bolo would say, he will "return the diamond, lead the club, rough the spade, lead through the honour, bring out the ace, play up to the king"; but he will have nothing to say to the arts of the professional sharp. That sort of thing is simply "not done" in the circles adorned by Viscount Harcourt. Less scrupulous gamblers, with cards up their sleeves, and little mirrors that tell them more than they should know about the other players' hands, are common enough in modern politics; the mere knuckle-duster man, who relies on violence when intellect fails, is not altogether unknown. My Lord Harcourt marches, very erectly, out of suspicious company of that kind. He will neither "do" nor be "done" irregularly, but all the same he longs for a quiet little rubber, and looks forward to the time when the swell mobsmen will get arrested or the supply of greenhorns fail, and he can play his own game with men of his own kind.

His game, of course, is the old-fashioned



political whist, the whist of our ancestors, going so well with old port, antique oak panelling, a Chippendale card table, and a general atmosphere of eighteenth-century wealth and cosiness; the old-fashioned leisurely long whist, with honours. Auction bridge and other products of modern feverishness he dislikes; and he is none too pleased to be pestered with women in the card-room. His objection to the woman voter was essentially that of the whist player who feels that women cannot be relied on to maintain the full solemnity the game demands. On that subject he was cross with Viscount Grey as with an eccentric of his own class. A very different feeling was roused by Mr. Lloyd George's continual itch to introduce games livelier, noisier, less stately and patrician. He admires Mr. Asquith immensely as a deft player of the right class; tolerates the McKennas and Runcimans, and does not even object to a well-conducted Samuel or so. But when the card-room is filled with noisy fellows, who play for the stakes rather than the game, the noble Viscount withdraws to a quiet corner in the full assurance that, given enough rope, they will hang themselves.

He is in such retirement just now, a retirement not wholly without menace to certain revellers in possession. When Mr. Lewis Harcourt magnificently permitted the King to do himself the

pleasure of reviving the old Harcourt Viscounty he bade farewell in fitting terms to his late constituents of Rossendale. His health, he said, would no longer permit of his appearance on the electioneering platform; but it was quite adequate to administrative work. In other words, the Lord Viscount will not engage in what Mr. Morgan called a "holtercation" with anybody. He will just wait, as a nobleman with a twelfth-century pedigree should, until his time comes. Then he will be ready with all his assets: a manner that was always rather too precious for the modern House of Commons, a wit pleasantly mordant, a practical capacity not to be despised, and a political shrewdness useful to any leader, perhaps not inadequate in some circumstances to leadership itself.

Will the time ever come? Or is the day of Harcourtian Whiggism gone for aye? Much depends on the mood of the British people when it is finally free from the pre-occupations of foreign affairs. When Viscount Harcourt says, as he did say some time ago, that the British constitution represents "the most perfect and most complete democracy the world ever conceived or constructed," one begins to wonder what can be the stuff of Viscount Harcourt's conceptions of democracy, or what democracy can make of Viscount Harcourt. But when he says, as he also

did some time ago, that he proposed to carry the flag in revolt against the Jack-in-office, it seems by no means so incredible that he may again be in touch with popular sentiment. The British people has no passion for *laissez faire*, and it seems (the General Election verdict notwithstanding) to have a real, if vague, aspiration for some closer approach to democracy than the constitution which Viscount Harcourt lauds. It is not in the mood for the old political game of whist; it wants something quite other than games of any kind. But if the choice were really narrowed, unfortunately, to two things—the Whig *roi fainéant*, and the pseudo-Socialist Jack (or Knave) in office—the common man might very well choose the former as the lesser evil. With the last shot of the war a murmur began to be heard; the discerning perceived it, like the tune behind the rattle of a railway train, in the very roar of the armistice; and the feeling behind that murmur is destined to frustrate many fine schemes to Germanise and make us wise. If it is heeded, the turn of Viscount Harcourt may never come; if not, it will not be the first time the British people have cried: “Take salaries, honours, what you will, so long as you spare us from being really ruled by you or the like of you.” It was experience of Castlereagh and his friends

after Waterloo that made almost every thinking Englishman a virtual anarchist for half a century, just as anarchism run mad in its turn brought Socialism into fashion. Herbert Spencer had only just perfected the doctrine of universal no-rule when Viscount Harcourt's father declared "We are all Socialists now."

If a rebound as sudden is to come, men like Viscount Harcourt would have one advantage not to be overlooked. Politics may be a game for such as he. Or, if a politer terminology be preferred, we may call it a vocation. It is not strictly a business. Viscount Harcourt is not on the make—not looking, as some politicians are, for a few thousands, or, like others, for very many millions. He is too rich to care about small spoils, and his wealth is not of the kind that seeks perpetual expansion. A combination of poor adventurers and monstrously rich business men might easily drive the country back half a century, and that is really where Viscount Harcourt belongs, despite his extremely modern externals. It is but negative praise to say of a man that he can be trusted with the key of the national safe. But circumstances are imaginable in which such a recommendation would carry great weight; and "business government," which has been so businesslike in war as to move Auditors-General

to wail over millions unaccounted for, has still to run the gauntlet of free criticism in years of peace—and impoverishment. Perhaps Lord Harcourt's time, as leader of the revolt against the Jack-in-office, may come sooner than some people think. He is certainly waiting for it to arrive.

## THE BISHOP OF LONDON

WHEN, some eighteen years ago, Dr. Ingram was appointed to the See of London, it was expected that he would become an influence. Instead, he has developed into a character.

The Right Reverend Arthur Foley Winnington Ingram, then Bishop of Stepney, was apparently regarded as a sort of antidote to his two immediate predecessors. Strongly as they differed in every other particular, both Temple and Creighton were men of marked intellectual vigour. Temple, with his harsh and masculine common sense, his rather repellent manners, and his wounding satire, Creighton, with his elegant scholarship and worldly polish, were the very opposite of mystics. They both dominated wherever they had any fancy for domination. Temple, riding on an omnibus and munching his bun in a tea-shop, ruled by power of character; Creighton, never happier than when offering men of all worlds cigarettes from a golden case and epigrams from a mind as precious metallic, ruled by power of tact. But neither of them gave the notion of having anything specially to do with spiritual things; they

were managers of an organisation rather than the high-priests of a religion. To the one London House was a place from which to send out business letters, to the other a place from which to issue invitations. The idea behind Dr. Ingram's appointment was to make his headquarters something quite different. It was to become a sort of spiritual power-house, whence a vitalising current would radiate to all parts of the enormous Bishopric.

Nobody looked to Dr. Ingram to maintain the tradition of profound learning and shrewd statesmanship so long associated with the See of London. His parts, it is true, were by no means contemptible. But he was more the earnest priest than the scholar, and his contributions to theological literature savoured on the whole of the parish magazine. It was on the spiritual side that most was expected of him. He was young—not much over forty. He was zealous. He had a great name as a slum worker, and it was a time when the slum was forcing itself on the attention of the Church. London wanted to be stirred up. It was felt necessary to "do something," as the phrase goes, and Dr. Ingram was thought the man to do it. His warm humanity, it was hoped, would effect what learning and courtliness had failed to achieve. He might really contribute to the Christianisation of the great pagan capital.

How far these hopes have been realised it is not for the present writer to say. Perhaps the warmest admirers of the Bishop sometimes feel a certain disappointment. But if Dr. Ingram himself is ever conscious of unfulfilled expectations he never shows it. He is as sanguine and gay now as when he first undertook the enormous burden. The cheerfulness of Dr. Ingram is indeed a wonderful thing. He belongs to the muscular Christian school. If he has not too much muscle it is not his fault; his intentions are of the best. He plays a sort of football match with the powers of evil, and is never happier than in the "scrum." His cheery "Well played, our side," is—or ought to be—a compensation for much. He believes in the slap on the back as a moral stimulant. It smoothes over things with a backsliding costermonger. It pricks the conscience of the selfish "swell." It is the best answer to the ranting atheist lecturer, who, the Bishop will tell interviewers gravely, "has really quite a lot of good in him."

If some Jean Valjean were to walk off with Dr. Ingram's candlesticks he would doubtless be admonished by a slap on the back; whether he would be transformed by it into a virtuous factory-owner is another matter. One has some little doubt of the general efficacy of the method, though none concerning the excellence of the practitioner. One wonders, for example, whether



it really does help the Bishop that he can talk to the inhabitants of Bethnal Green "in their own slang." For their own slang is their own language, and no man likes to hear his own language treated lightly by the alien; was it not annoying to have the late German Crown Prince talking of "playing cricket"? From the East End point of view, a Bishop, even a Bishop "without side," is a "toff"—that is, a foreigner—and is expected to use his own tongue, or at least to talk the native dialect with something less than the insolent ease of a native. A Duke would certainly resent a costermonger talking to him in a Duke's slang; and the costermonger, though he may politely conceal the fact (for there is real politeness among costermongers), does not like having his own sacred speech imitated. Noble lords who, at election times, address a working-class audience as "old pals," flatter themselves on their finesse. They would probably be quite surprised to know that the liberty is resented, just as they themselves would resent their own tailors pushing a waistcoat pattern as "top-hole" or "priceless."

In short, it may be questioned whether the Bishop, with all that East End experience behind him, really knows much that is fundamental about the London workman, or understands how to appeal either to his humour or his serious side,

But a conviction to the contrary sustains the Bishop, which is perhaps the main thing. His astonishing vitality is no doubt the direct consequence of his painstaking optimism. "Take one day at a time," he said once, "and trust to the Holy Spirit to see you through. That is the basis of my religion. It keeps me bright and happy, and even merry, every day of my life." This spirit he carries into everything; and with its aid bears up surprisingly. "I have often taken a cup of coffee with him," he said of a great theatre manager. "He came to cheer me up in the middle of a play." It is an eloquent testimony to the Bishop and the manager, if a little cruel to the play.

Dr. Ingram has been condemned by the Protestants as too Romanist and by the Ritualists as too Protestant. This does not mean that he has no views of his own. They are strong and sincere, but after all he has sixteen hundred clergy to look after, and they can't all think the same way. The main thing is the work. While there are certain definitely evil things to be fought—drink, social uncleanness, and the rest—argument about the finer quilllets of the ecclesiastical law may wait; and besides sins to be fought there are dinners to be attended, meetings to be addressed, Tower Hill crowds to be harangued, soldiers to be slapped on the back,

*Solvitur ambulando.* It is all very healthy, manly, common sense, and earnest, going well with the Bishop's golf and fives.

Yet it must be very hard work, keeping up this cheerful sanity every day of the week and every waking hour of the day. Small wonder that the Bishop's face sometimes wears an almost pathetic look of quiet fatigue, resembling that of a "Do-it-Now" millionaire. Perhaps after a certain point it is a little morbid to be too healthy. One might almost go farther, and wonder whether the whole business of the Bishopric is not a mistake. Has Dr. Ingram really found his highest usefulness in rushing from one activity to another, trying to be shepherd, and watch-dog, the man who cuts up turnips, and all the rest of the establishment in one? And that with the biggest flock in the world? Not to mention, by the way, the obligation of munching with the flock at intervals, to show good feeling? The main task of rule, in its broadest contours, is more than the work of one man, however great. How can any one individual, though "fit" as Sandow, fill so many parts?

Dr. Ingram may, indeed, be really only one more example of the way in which the Established Church fails to employ good material to the best advantage. Macaulay, in an oft-quoted passage, has pointed out how Rome uses the

uncultured enthusiast who in England would be lost to the Church and leave its fold to set up another Bethel. Rome ties a rope round her Bunyans, and sends them forth to preach and work miracles in her name. The Church of England politely points out that they have no Greek. But the criticism goes somewhat deeper. The Church as frequently fails to make the most of the well-bred, highly educated enthusiasts within the pale of its priesthood. It sets a born historian to confirm village children, and a born evangelist to preach to the clerk, the sexton, and pew-opener. Has it made this sort of mistake over Dr. Ingram ?

It was well, no doubt, that he should spend some time in Bethnal Green, to learn what one end of London is like. But his true business was with the other end. If the East End is to be Christianised it must be by a poor priesthood, who need not "talk to the people in their own slang." The people will know them by a hundred signs, however they talk. And, too, if the West End is to be Christianised it must be by men who know their slang, their sins, and their own not slight sorrows as only a native can.

I read somewhere that the Bishop of London in his own person is "a human bridge between Belgravia and Bethnal Green." One wonders whether the writer knew anything of either place.

Such a bridge can only be built, like that of the Beresina, on multitudes of splendid lives, and by any sound engineering plan the work must proceed simultaneously from both sides of the chasm. The Bishop's side is clearly Belgravia. Is his best tool the crozier ?

## SIR ALFRED MORITZ MOND \*

SIR ALFRED MOND sits for Swansea, and has done so since 1910, when he was a Radical of the fieriest type. There is a story, unhappily apocryphal, that on his introduction to this constituency he delivered an eloquent speech on Welsh Nationalism, which ended on the ringing note, "Vales for the Vellsch." The undecorated truth, of course, is that Sir Alfred suffers only in the faintest degree from what was described in the days of the late member for Darlington, that distinguished Hungarian patriot, Mr. Tribisch Lincoln, as "the Lincoln handicap." He speaks the King's English, that is to say, as some earlier English kings have spoken it, with just a slight thickening of certain consonants. Otherwise, vocally and in other ways, he is the normal product of such a school as Cheltenham and such a college as John's. He is just as English as (say) the Rothschilds.

But, while the story is not true, one feels somehow that it ought to be. For enthusiasm in a national cause not one's own is the last infirmity of cosmopolitan minds, and Sir Alfred Mond,

though Lancashire born and bull-dog bred, is of the cosmopolitan type. It is not merely that he is the son of a very eminent German chemist, who came to this country in the middle of Queen Victoria's reign and founded the great and smelly industry of which every traveller to Liverpool by the North-Western Railway is painfully aware shortly after he leaves Crewe. Had Ludwig Mond come of the purest North Country stock he could not have been, by modern standards, a greater benefactor to Great Britain; the works of Widnes have been an immense source of national wealth, and have only blasted country which was pretty hopeless before. Dr. Mond was a calm man of science, belonging to the rather detached Germany of the pre-Empire period; he identified himself heartily with his adopted country; and in his public munificence he showed an example to native-born millionaires which on the whole they have been rather slow to follow.

The war laid so much stress on a particular aspect of the German that we are apt to overlook the fact that until quite lately he was the most easily absorbed of all foreigners. We are further prone to forget that the invasion of our politics by the sons of newcomers is no novel thing. They have not only allied themselves with our parties, but have even shown a special tendency to adopt as their own the bitterest and most

recondite of our insular vendettas. Thirty years ago nobody thought of examining with jealous scrutiny the family trees of the Mundellas, Herschells, Goschens, or Laboucheres, and in honouring Benjamin Disraeli honest English squires almost believed that they were honouring themselves as the class that produced him. We may therefore disregard as unphilosophical the kind of prejudice which delights in laying emphasis on the "Moritz," and in pointing out that the maiden name of Lady Mond, the granddaughter of John Bentley, was Goetze. It is not his father's blood, but other things inherited from his father, that make reasonable men regard Sir Alfred, as a politician, with a certain strained attention.

This feeling, by whatever name one cares to call it, does not apply to Sir Alfred Mond as an individual. As a human being he is perhaps more attractive than most very rich men. For if he sometimes talks humbug, it is humbug so rich as to be inoffensive, like the boasting of a Gascon or the lying of a Maltese. Nobody can be seriously annoyed with Sir Alfred Mond in the character of the hot-blooded Celt, or resent his Nonconformist zeal for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales; one is rather grateful for the importation of a little fun without vulgarity into the dull world of politics. Besides, he is not a philan-



thropist of the modern kind, or at any rate refrains from talking like one, which is the next best thing. He has no passion for free libraries or model villages of bondsmen. He has argued about Free Trade without cant, and about Germany without vindictiveness or sentiment. He has shown, as First Commissioner of Works, considerable administrative ability, such as one would expect from a man of his great business experience and rather wide culture. He has a discriminating taste in art, and a gift of hospitality. In short, he is able in his way, good-natured in his way, and not insincere in his way; and he is well liked by those who like him, including a good many literary and artistic people whom he has befriended in a careless and unostentatious way.

It is simply because he is a rather flamboyant specimen of a certain class of very rich men that Sir Alfred Mond compels this watchfulness to which reference has been made. The British people are familiar enough with the spectacle of wealth in power. The history of British domestic politics has been little more than the record of the selfishness of the great landlords, the great bankers, the great brewers, the great ship-owners, the great traders, and the great manufacturers. But in times less complex there was at least the safeguard of nationality. The wealth was English

wealth; a Duke might be an oppressive landlord, but he was likely to be, according to his lights, an excellent Briton, for the simple reason (if no other existed) that patriotism paid; if the country went down he went down also. The typical rich man of to-day is, on the other hand, cosmopolitan, though he may have a pedigree as purely "Anglo-Saxon" as that of Wamba the son of Witless, whose grandfather was an Alderman. The high tariff policies of most modern States have hastened a process which was probably inevitable, given free play to capitalistic enterprise. An English concern, finding itself excluded from a foreign market, naturally sought to evade the restriction, and found the solution in the formation of a foreign company in which it acquired an interest. Hence in due course the extraordinary network of more or less closely associated enterprises which puzzled and shocked British patriots during the war, and probably gave equal concern to German patriots.

Such allied enterprises naturally cover a field of operations that would be impracticable for a single partnership or company, however large. It is the difference between the growth of a mammal and the growth of a sponge; the lower the organism, the less soul it possesses, the more rapid its multiplication. We arrive at last at something of which the older economists, whose

notions were coloured with the illusion that there must be a strict limit to the size of any enterprise, never dreamed. They were in the position of a botanist who knew nothing of vegetable life outside of Europe, and could imagine no other conditions. He might reasonably argue that no tree could be very much bigger than an oak or beech, because the force of the wind must assign a limit to mere height; it would never strike him that there could be a tree like the banyan, of which one specimen would make a grove. Modern cosmopolitan finance follows the rule of the banyan rather than the oak. It is not one stem rising to a great and conspicuous height, but a forest in which all the stems seem separate, but are really connected with the parent tree. And just as it is by no means easy to distinguish in a banyan grove which is the parent tree, so it is hard for the ordinary man to tell what influence is really behind any particular aggregation of capital.

A park is given to London and somebody in politics becomes mysteriously well-to-do. At about the same time a concession is made to a great firm in an out-of-the-way part of the world. Sherlock Holmes himself could scarcely trace a connection between the two sets of events, and yet a connection there may very well be. It seems impossible to a newspaper reader in London

that the opinions he reads in vigorous vernacular can be dictated by an Americanised Hungarian in Chicago or a German steel-founder on the Rhine; yet there is no reason why it should not be so. It seems fanciful to suppose that a member of the House of Commons, with perhaps an ancient Scottish name, may be the mere spy and factotum of a Continental kartel; yet the easy success in our politics of pure foreigners whose bad faith has been exposed suggests that stranger things might happen.

Sir Alfred Mond has not escaped a natural jealousy against the concentration of all kinds of power into one pair of hands, and those a very capable pair. The same kind of jealousy was felt when a certain colossus of wealth went into politics; it long kept him out of office, and it was not entirely quieted by his moderate use of power. The same sort of jealousy would pursue, say, Lord Leverhulme, the Rothschilds, and the Samuels, if they took to publishing newspapers and organising House of Commons cliques.

Sir Alfred Mond would pass unnoticed if he were simply a great landlord seeking a Garter, or a mere man of wealth after a barony. But he is more than that. He is a very pushful and skilful hand at the political game, working for the most part behind the scenes, and fully alive to the importance of the newspaper as a weapon.

He is immensely rich, acute, cynical, and probably knows quite well what he wants; and he occupies a subordinate position in a Government which includes poor men, men easily flattered, men exceedingly puzzle-headed, and men by their records not specially scrupulous.

Is it wonderful that the spectacle is slightly perturbing to many Britons? They would be quite comfortable with a multi-millionaire who was also an obvious ninny. But it is just the combination of great wealth, great ability, and apparent humility which makes Mr. Lloyd George's bevy of millionaire subordinates so questionable to the ordinary man. The ordinary man is probably quite wrong. All of us have much of the child in us, and there is no real reason why quite minor office should not appeal to a man with Sir Alfred Mond's vast possessions and wide influence in other directions. But the interest of him and his like in politics will always evoke a popular note of interrogation.

## GEORGES CLEMENCEAU \*

EVERY artist who has caricatured Georges Eugene Benjamin Clemenceau has laid stress on the Mongolian suggestion in his strong features: a suggestion that has grown more pronounced with every year of his later life. M. Clemenceau springs from La Vendée, of a family of small landowners, with a taste for politics and doctoring; and there are ethnologists who hold that the Vendéans, like some other races of the extreme West, have more than a suspicion of Oriental blood. Be the fact as it may—and we are beginning to shake ourselves free of some of the grosser superstitions concerning race—it is not without a reason that so many observers have laid emphasis on the same point. In representing M. Clemenceau as a Kalmuck, or even a cave-man, the satirist has only distorted a truth. For, while the great Frenchman is very French and very civilised, the prime fact about him is something not specially French and still less specially civilised. It is something, indeed, that civilisation tends to weaken—the instinct to know an enemy at sight

and the will to sacrifice everything to his destruction.

Clemenceau is a great man to-day by virtue, not of his intellect, though it is vigorous, nor of his learning, though it is considerable, nor of his industry, though it is immense; but of a quality which Herbert Spencer years ago derided as characteristically barbaric, if not brutish: that tenacity in conflict which regards every evil as nothing compared with surrender. The elaborate sarcasm of the Victorian philosopher looks foolish enough in the light of war experience; in superiority to merely physical evils the most civilised races have shown themselves the most stoical; and it is clearly a calumny to say that "game-ness" in polished mankind is only a pale reflection of the same virtue in the savage or the wild animal. But of the moral hardihood that shrinks from no load of responsibility, and is willing to put all to the hazard, there have been far fewer examples; in that regard there does seem, in all countries, some declension from the old standard. Were the case otherwise, it is certain that Georges Clemenceau would not be mentioned in French official records as having "deserved well of his country."

For, in truth, when Clemenceau, at the age of seventy-six, took charge of the fortunes of the French Republic and People, the

choice was limited to one. Not that France lacked talent. There was plenty of eloquence, wit, business ability, technical capacity. But there was no mastery, and the supreme need at that moment was the voice, the hand, and even the whip of a master. It was a terrible moment. That splendid stoicism with which the French had supported the strain of three dreadful years was being fast undermined by dissension and intrigue. "Treason and half-treason," to use Clemenceau's expression, were active. Russia had fallen out; America had not come in; all France was full of whisperings against the British. The "sacred union" had become only a phrase; creeping things which had so far done their foul work in secret now almost emerged, with a sense of safety and accomplished purpose, into the light. It seemed beyond the power of a young Napoleon to restore the tone necessary for endurance to the end; and now, by a tragic irony, the task devolved on an ancient politician whose sole reputation had been that of a destroyer. The man who was to heal dissensions was he who had spent his life in breeding them.

"We are swimming in a sea of incoherence," said M. Clemenceau genially when attacked for some now forgotten inconsistency. Superficially regarded, indeed, no man's political record could present less appearance of unity. He had been



a Boulangist and an anti-Boulangist; he had denounced Dreyfus as a traitor and pleaded for him as a martyr; he had opposed Colonial expansion, and added to France's Colonial commitments; he had declaimed against State interference in industrial disputes, and had himself called out horse, foot, and artillery to overawe strikers. He had attacked every French statesman of his time always with violence and sometimes with injustice. He bore, in short, very much the sort of reputation the late Henry Labouchere achieved in British politics. He was an Ishmaelite, with a sharp tongue, a still sharper pen, and a duelling sword as ready and trenchant as either.

But beneath this surface of the cynical boulevardier carrying "*blague*" and "*je m'en fiche*" to extremity, there was always something very strong and real. Clemenceau has never ceased to be two things—a Republican and free-thought democrat and a French patriot. Like his father, who was imprisoned by Napoleon, he represents atheistic Republicanism against all kinds of kings and all kinds of priests. He is really no more "of the people" than an English squire, but he is most truly of the Revolution, and, after the manner of his countrymen, he knows no compromise: to see a head is to hit it. And he has been seeing one head—adorned with a pickelhaube

—ever since 1870. The aged politician of 1917 felt exactly as did the young doctor of forty-six years earlier who was for fighting to the end, come what might. Supremely irreverent as regards many Frenchmen, he knew, loved, and trusted France. He might even hate some Frenchmen with all the legendary professor's bitterness for a rival theory of irregular verbs; but in remembering them he never forgot the enemy. Once we hold the main clues to Clemenceau's action, his distrust of Rome and his fear of Potsdam, "The Tiger" ceases to be a mere instinctive man-eater, with no better motive than love of carnage. In any case, the jungle was not ours, and judgment is for his own countrymen. Moreover, as M. Clemenceau himself has said, "All that is of the past, and matters now not at all."

What did matter in that dismal winter of 1917 was that the boundless audacity of the old Frondeur never faltered. An almost gay confidence mingled with the cool intrepidity of the veteran duellist. Clemenceau probably never had a suspicion of being a hero; heroism seemed to him merely the hardest common sense: a patriot defending the Fatherland was only on a bigger scale the cave-man defending his cave—it mattered nothing that he knew logarithms and the Latin names of his bones and emotions, and other

things undreamed of in the cave-man's philosophy. "My policy—it is victory"—like the cave-man's. "Home politics? I wage war. Foreign politics? I wage war. Russia betrays us? I continue to wage war. We will fight before Paris; we will fight behind Paris; we will fight, if necessary, to the Pyrenees. I will continue till the very last quarter of an hour, because the last quarter of an hour will be ours."

It was this gigantic simplicity that gave Clemenceau his power. Other men had many objects; he had but one—victory. Other men had many enemies and (still worse) many friends; Clemenceau, the connoisseur in quarrels, knew no enemy but Germany, and no friend but any tool against Germany. One tool there was that lay idle: a certain devout Catholic named Foch; and him the rabid free-thinker brought back to his job, enormously enlarged, because he happened to be (besides a pupil of the priests) the greatest soldier of his age.

What Foch did, will it not be written in many ponderous tomes? But the best part of what Clemenceau did can hardly be written; for we are here in the region of things quite incalculable, as potent as light or music, and as imponderable. It would be as easy to attempt to express in foot-pounds the dawn, or the martial strain that gives new life to fainting men.

## MR. JOHN BURNS \*

ROMNEY the painter married at an early age a young woman of his own class. Leaving her, he went to London, made money and a name, was courted and caressed, had Lady Hamilton as model and all the grandees as sitters. At last, stricken in years, broken in fortune, ill, weary, disillusioned, he bethought himself of the long-neglected wife in Westmorland, and returned to be forgiven and nursed for the short remainder of his life.

A somewhat similar reconciliation took place just before the General Election of 1918 between the Right Honourable John Burns and the Labour party. There was perhaps never a formal breach between them. But undeniably the Right Honourable John was a very different person from the John Burns of Trafalgar Square and Tower Hill and of the "Dockers' Tanner" strike. Mr. Burns, it is true, was at no time a Labour Member, but a Radical, or, to use the jargon of a few years past, a "Lib.-Lab." Even in his unofficial days the line of distinction between him and people like the late Mr. Keir Hardie was of the sharpest;

and when he became a Minister he was of all Ministers the most ministerial. No man showed more delight in the mere fiddle-faddle and paraphernalia of office. It was a joy to him to sit in great official armchairs, to warm his back at generous Circumlocution fireplaces, to get into a Windsor uniform, or to pervade his favourite club with an air of having two draft Bills and a new treaty in his reefer-jacket pockets. Certain fellow-members of some small distinction still tell with an enormous relish how John Burns, once to them "*familiar as his garter*," gradually broke off intimacy from the moment of his elevation, until at last the great man came to eye them with the genuinely puzzled look of one who asks, "Where *have* I seen that man?"

In the same tactful way the late President of the Local Government Board gradually shook himself free of his former comrades of the Social Democratic Federation. Nobody could accuse him exactly of "spurning the base degrees by which he did ascend" to the perfection of bourgeois respectability and bureaucratic correctitude. He simply left them behind, like the houses which successively proved inadequate for his growing fortunes, not scornfully or unkindly, with some sentimental regrets perhaps, but most decisively all the same. If Mr. Burns were an egotist on only a slightly smaller scale, it might be possible

to impute to him some portion of that snobbery which Lord Burnham some time ago declared is no longer to be included among British characteristics. But such a suspicion would be unjust. All that is really wrong with Mr. Burns is a slightly defective sense of humour, illustrated in his remark to "C.-B.," on being offered the Presidency of the Local Government Board: "Allow me to say, Sir Henry, it is the most popular appointment you could have made." The centre of the Burns cosmogony is Burns, and it is natural that the Right Honourable John should think as little of smaller things as the sun does of yesterday's clouds. It is the same with questions as with men. Others saw plainly in 1914 how far he had travelled from 1889; it is pretty certain that "honest John" himself was conscious of no change. He was in his official heaven; how could anything be wrong with the world?

John Burns in the late eighties was inclined to think the times out of joint, and signified the same in words chiefly of seven syllables. It was then the fashion to regard him as a social danger. But the only really perilous side of Mr. Burns was the buoyant optimism of his later period. After all, a new heaven and a new earth did not come into existence when he went to Whitehall, but Mr. Burns seems to have had no doubt on the point. He was willing to admit, of course,

that some few finishing strokes were needed, otherwise why pay the strict trade union wage of a Minister to Mr. Burns? But with a "community of interest," a "unity of endeavour," a "spontaneity of effort," an "identity of action," and various other vague polysyllabic things, all would be well, provided Battersea kept faithful to Mr. Burns, and Mr. Burns remained at Whitehall.

Probably but for the war Mr. Burns would have remained at Whitehall so long as a Liberal Prime Minister kept house in Downing Street. For he was strongly entrenched. His strength, it is true, was not precisely in the esteem of his colleagues. Some regarded him with no great reverence as a business Minister, and others objected to him as a singularly obstinate reactionary. Others, again, unjustly looked on him as a mere careerist. It is notorious that he did not "get on" with Mr. Lloyd George. It is equally certain that Mr. Asquith did not get on with him. Mr. Asquith was the most tolerant of men in many important things. He permitted a quite dangerous liberty to some of his subordinates. He freely forgave grave disloyalty in others of his followers. But two things he could hardly pardon. One was Mr. Burns's taste for robust English. The other was Mr. Burns's weakness for elementary Latin. The first false quantity

sealed Mr. Burns's fate in that quarter, and it may be surmised that the only "bright spot" for Mr. Asquith when war was declared was not Ireland, but the vacant Board of Trade.

Still, Mr. Burns would have no doubt endured—such is the force of legend in a sceptical age—but for the war. Here was a living romance, a "Labour" man who had climbed without assistance from two pounds a week to five thousand a year; could he be anything but a success? To declare otherwise would be to shatter the very foundations of the faith delivered by Dr. Samuel Smiles, and no Radical Prime Minister dare figure in a character so iconoclastic. It remained for the Germans to shatter the Burns myth, or, to put the matter more accurately, to leave it with one solitary believer—Mr. Burns himself. It is idle to discuss, on such knowledge as we have, the motives that led Mr. Burns to accompany Lord Morley and Mr. Trevelyan into retirement. They were no doubt perfectly sincere, though it is difficult to envisage as a typical pacifist the man who was so fond of soldiers, and who has so often used his fists to enforce an argument. It is true, also, that on August 3, 1914, we did not know all we know now. But the fact remains that from the one really popular decision since the Restoration Mr. Burns, who owed his whole position to a popular delusion, dissented. The



nation guessed right; Mr. Burns guessed wrong; and August 3, 1914, witnessed his political death.

The rest may be interesting, from a psychical research standpoint, but is of little practical importance. Mr. Burns may come back into politics, but only in the French sense of "*revenant*." His latter appearances at Westminster showed all the quality of spectral phenomena. He pervaded the Lobbies and smoke-rooms, a white-bearded and white-haired figure, breathing to living humanity the message, "I have been." He sometimes showed soldiers round the Chambers; occasionally he spoke in a House that listened to him with a queer kind of awe as to a visitant from another world. And, indeed, he is just that. John Burns is not only a ghost; he is a very old-fashioned ghost, as old-fashioned as the bad baronet with ruffles and rapier. The world he belonged to may have been a good world or a bad, but it has vanished as utterly as the French monarchy. John Burns's memoirs are understood to be coveted by a dozen publishers, and they may be really valuable specimens of the "Under Four Reigns" *genre*. But for any topical interest they should have been published when the author was still politically alive.

Such is the man who, four years after his retirement from office and just before his retirement from Parliament, came back to the Labour

fold. In present-day politics we are not accustomed to look for pure philanthropy, and it must be assumed that if the leaders of the Labour party welcomed Mr. Burns it was in the expectation that he would prove not an encumbrance, but a paying guest. Doubts may be entertained as to the quality of the bargain. It is not the old men who remember Mr. Burns as a democratic fighter who will control the Labour movement of the future. It is the young men, who will remember him only as the middle-class politician who would neither give his vote for fighting nor his arm for working. One mistake, though a capital one, might have been forgiven Mr. Burns. What is neither forgotten nor forgiven is the success with which the most garrulous of men kept silent and the most restless of men remained inactive through four years big with fate. That memory goes far—perhaps too far—to obscure the real worth of John Burns, as London citizen and friend of the under-dog, in the days when Battersea was very near to him and Whitehall very distant.

## MR. G. K. CHESTERTON

MR. CHESTERTON, as a jesting philosopher, suffers one considerable disadvantage. Serious people tend to like his jokes and distrust his philosophy. Flippant people are willing to respect his philosophy at a distance, but refuse to be amused by his pleasantries.

There is a highly intellectual set of men—their view is expressed by Mr. A. G. Gardiner—who will not have Mr. Chesterton as a thinker, but roar their sides out when he makes a pun. They insist on treating him simply as an embodied, even over-embodied, jest, as “your only jig-maker,” a “Thousand Best Things,” bound, like the books of Meudon, in human skin. On the other hand, the professional merry-makers find little amusement in Mr. Chesterton. Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Cadbury parted. Mr. Chesterton and Sir Owen Seaman have apparently never met. The greatest joke of the age is never seen in *Punch*.

It is, I suppose, Mr. Chesterton's own fault that he is so generally conceived as a chuckle, *et præterea parvum*. He has made himself, or allowed himself to become, too much of a character.

There was a time when he sat on a high-legged stool, in a City office, doing something with invoices. It is true he did not stay there long, but his mere presence for the fraction of a day would seem proof that at one time he was thought commercially possible, capable of being made some sort of a clerk. That is to say, he must have presented some outward resemblance to other youths; from Aldgate Pump to St. Paul's Churchyard no firm exists wide-minded enough to admit a recruit with the vast sombrero, the Samsonian locks, and the Bolivar-poncho cloak which at a later period were the honest pride of Fleet Street, still revelling, though grown prim itself, in the reputation of Bohemianism. Whether Mr. Chesterton, of fixed purpose, adopted the dress and mannerisms of his earlier period, or whether it was all more or less an accident, only Mr. Chesterton may say. But in permitting himself to become an oddity he threw away much of his birthright as an influence.

The fault is, of course, the time's as well as Mr. Chesterton's. Socrates was joked at as much as Mr. Chesterton, but Socrates was no joke. Many a saint must have raised a coarse laugh by his appearance, but no saint was ever a laughing matter. Yet we moderns, with our mania for specialism, will hardly allow Jack Point to have a soul to save or a tooth to ache. If accepted as

an authentic funny man, he must be funny for ever. The mere fact about Mr. Chesterton is that he is a big man, who dresses as he likes, and, being inactive and fond of his comfort, used to take many cabs when cabs could be taken. He also drank a certain moderate quantity of beer when it was, at least, an intelligible proceeding to drink beer. Further, he preferred an excellent meal in a tavern, with good company, to decorous malnutrition at two shillings a mouthful.

It was inevitable that a legend should grow round such a man; unfortunately the legend, for most people, has strangled the man, as ivy does a tree. I have before me what purports to be a critical study of Mr. Chesterton. If I knew nothing else of the subject I should picture a person physically and mentally inert, conceited, rather puerile, and given to paltry verbal smartness—a Cockney Tony Lumpkin who, like Olivia Primrose, had “read a great deal of controversy.” It may be Mr. Chesterton’s fault that he is so represented. It is certainly society’s misfortune that it has no clearer estimate of one of the most powerful personalities of the time.

Clearly the only way to arrive at the truth is to put in as evidence Mr. Chesterton’s own books. Swinburne has protested against the theory that an unlettered Shakespeare wrote “Hamlet” without effort in odd times—“as a bird might moult

a feather or a fool might break a jest"; he knew that such things were not made so. And the works of Gilbert Keith Chesterton contain ample testimony on which to found an impeachment of a quite novel kind. He stands hereby indicted for that he has laboured well and faithfully, first to see the truth and then to tell it; for that he, being a great rhetorician, seldom uses rhetoric to obscure or to deceive; and, being a great wit, employs wit only to season wisdom and make it memorable. How say you, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, are you guilty or not guilty?

Of course, Mr. Chesterton talks nonsense sometimes, and often he is right rather by a divine luck than by conscious effort. Of much of his work he can say, like Petruchio, "It is extempore, from my mother-wit." His insight, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say his power of guessing, almost approaches a sixth sense. His dexterity in using words is like that of a gifted stock-rider in using whips; he seems almost to misuse them in the sense of forcing them to do more than their proper work. It seems as unnatural to smash a rationalist with a pun as to flick a fly off a lady's back with a thirty-foot lash. Of Mr. Chesterton's wit there can be no question; it is stressed most by those least inclined to take him seriously. But the praise is nearly always wrongly given. The popular idea of him is of

a man perpetually standing on his head, and shouting joyously how funny things look from that standpoint; whereas the whole point of his best jokes is that he is astonished to be flat on his feet, while other men (quite gravely and naturally) are careering about upside down.

But wit, readiness, and even genius, fail to account for all the rare merit there is in much of Mr. Chesterton's work. This undisciplined jester, this wayward Bohemian, has done some remarkable things. For example, there is his "Victorian Age in Literature." It is a trifle, of course, but such a trifle! An essay is often condensed in a phrase; there are paragraphs in it with more real illumination than one can find in many laborious and scholarly treatises. Again, it is no light business to set about telling the history of England in two hundred and forty pages. Mr. Chesterton does not tell it; no god or mortal could. But, with much fancy, perhaps some fantasy, and a wealth of incidental wisdom, he gives more essential truth than has ever been packed in such a space by any English historical writer. Then there are his "Browning" and "Dickens"; on the whole these are, perhaps, on a lower plane, but they are most excellent criticism, and something more. Mr. Chesterton can provide us material for much thought even in a detective story, and a sheaf of his newspaper articles, if you

can take the trouble to thrash them, will provide much corn. He is wittier than Swift, and has more than Swift's wisdom. For his wisdom is of the heart as well as of the head; he feels even more strongly and truly than he thinks.

There is, of course, another and weaker side to Mr. Chesterton. His proper business is to give us great truths if possible, and, failing that, what the schoolboy would call "whopping great lies," lies so vast and provocative as to make the defence of truth a necessity. We want to know from him the rude and thorny path to one considerable place, and the broad road to another. But we do not look to him for a directory of Houndsditch or a plan of the underground places of Westminster. He is just as likely to be wrong in very small things as he is to be right in very large things. Not that the small things are unimportant, but they are work for lesser men. By all means let Mr. Chesterton thunder at Parliamentary corruption and Parliamentary futility in general; but the special case of the notorious Mr. Snide, M.P., is better left to another. It may be for the public good as well as for the comfort of Mr. Chesterton's own soul that he should rail at Israel, or, as he would himself put it, rescue the Jew from the unfair position he occupies in the modern State. But Mr. Chesterton is too big a man to spit upon a single Jewish gaberdine. It may be possible to



respect and even sympathise with Torquemada. But nobody of fine sense would like to think of him as taking a turn at the rack with his own hand.

It is this local lack of balance, much more than fear of the omnipresent and omnipotent Israelite, that prevents timid souls from adopting Mr. Chesterton as a leader. They are afraid that, if there happens to be no crusade, they may get mixed up in a pogrom. Yet he does, in a roundabout way, influence many who in turn have an effect on public opinion. These men quote his jests to point morals they have furtively borrowed from him. If you are fairly familiar with Mr. Chesterton's thought you will recognise it as easily in the leading columns as in the "Pithy Paragraphs" or "Wisdom of the Week." Of course, as in most cases of theft, the thief mars what he steals. But the merchandise does reach some sort of market that way. One catches thought, like disease, without knowing whence, and Mr. Chesterton, if he takes notice at all, must sometimes smile at finding in the primmest quarters a faint echo of his most revolutionary slogans.

For Mr. Chesterton, though and perhaps because he is an optimist, is a decided revolutionary. It must be added a generous one, for his compelling motive is a noble and comprehensive sympathy

with the captive and the oppressed. He sees in modern civilisation a Bastille in which there are very vile dungeons, moderately comfortable cells, and pleasant quarters for the governor and his staff, but in which all, governor and staff included, are true prisoners. It is dull work for Baisemeaux, the gaoler, as well as for the young prince, the unlucky pamphleteer, and the nameless wretches below the moat; and Mr. Chesterton would set them all free.

It is the tyranny of civilisation itself, the bondage of things rather than the incidental cruelties of men themselves bound (though in chains of gold and swathes of precious paper) that he is out to fight. He sympathises with a strike as a strike, without regard to the ostensible merits of the dispute. It is an attempt of the victim bound to the tyrannous wheel of routine to throw it momentarily out of gear if he cannot subdue it to his own rational wants. Such an attempt, if it asserts only for a moment the sovereignty of man over things, is worth the while.

There is a case for this passionate protest against the enslavement of the human spirit by the mere appurtenances of civilisation. And yet, while we may yield assent to Mr. Chesterton's doctrine of revolt in the abstract, is it quite well that, in such dangerous times, revolution for

revolution's sake should be preached with a kind of serious jollity by a man of great eloquence and talent? Is it well that, when our shaky old institutions are suffering the heaviest possible strain, all the wit and eloquence of Mr. Chesterton should be employed further to discredit them? Does he quite help just now? I wonder.

## LORD SYDENHAM OF COMBE

It is a common but unsound view that public opinion is formed by men who think. Much of it is made by men quite incapable of thought. There can be no greater practical mistake than to overlook the importance of the great army of writers and speakers who are nothing and originate nothing, but simply repeat the platitudes or fallacies that happen to be floating about in their circle. Contempt for what one may call the anthropoid mind, the intelligence of imitancy and hearsay, should not obscure the plain fact that it is often extremely powerful. It was not Darwin, for example, who convinced the little modern free-thinker that he originated in a jungle and ought to be rather happy that he has risen to a slum. It was rather the thousand-and-one loud fools who have wrenched Darwin's conclusions from their context.

In politics especially the anthropoid mind has great influence. The public is affected, as the stone is worn by the water-drop, *non vi sed saepe cadendo*. One foolish phrase, eternally repeated, works a miracle denied to the profoundest wisdom.

The wise man of fine intellect who says his say and has done with it may indeed win in the long run. But more useful in a whirling election campaign is the dull stump orator (mounted on a sufficient stump) who can go on repeating with passion and apparent conviction things not worth saying at all.

It is from this point of view that Lord Sydenham is well worth study. He never says a memorable thing; he writes discouraging English; he habitually slops about in quagmires of confusion; and he has withal a peculiar arrogance which ought to antagonise any spirited reader. It is an arrogance as curiously compounded as the melancholy of Jacques. It is not the simple and almost graceful arrogance of the mere man of rank, but has something of the soldier's, which is brusque, and the University man's, which is superior, and the Indian Civil Servant's, which is frankly intolerable. Perhaps no living writer is at once so powerfully soporific and so profoundly irritating. Yet it cannot be denied that Lord Sydenham is an influence by virtue of these very vices. His insensibility permits him always to be talking. His want of point commends him to the very large English class which suspects any kind of brilliance, and argues that, since most true things are rather prosaic, it must follow that very prosaic things must be specially true.

These remarks, of course, apply only to Lord Sydenham in his more recent capacity of journalist. Of his official career the present writer is incompetent to speak. It seems to have been of the ordinary "brilliant" kind. The mere facts are that George Sydenham Clarke, the son of a parson, joined the Royal Engineers in 1868; that he won the usual kind of minor honours in the usual kind of minor campaigns; that he afterwards got War Office employment and acquired the habit of getting on Commissions, Committees, and special missions; and that finally he reached undisputed greatness as Governor of Victoria and Bombay. It is a reasonable inference that, coming from no family in particular, he owed this steady rise to real aptitudes and industries of his own. Parsons' sons, like wholesale grocers, are not made peers for nothing; and it is quite reasonable to conclude that, since Lord Sydenham is not notoriously a monster of wealth, he must have been a man of marked administrative ability.

But, just as a prisoner charged with disorderly conduct is precluded the defence that he once won the Victoria Cross, so Lord Sydenham cannot bring before a literary assize his proud record in the Antipodes and the Indian Empire. He must be judged as if he were, say, Mr. Harold Begbie. As a journalist, it must be handsomely acknowledged, he is extraordinarily industrious and

versatile, with that "nose for news," that uncanny instinct for the topical, which distinguishes a master of the craft. He knows exactly what is "uppermost." The day before yesterday it was the Zeppelins; the day before that it was the Channel Tunnel; Lord Sydenham emerged as an authority on both. Then the Prime Minister says something about drink, and in the same evening's paper Lord Sydenham is explaining his notion of a perfect strait-waistcoat for the unsteady son of toil. Next comes a week-end strike, and for his favourite Sunday paper Lord Sydenham produces from his hat, as the conjuror does a rabbit, the very latest West End recipe for an industrial millennium, in which every workman will earn fabulous wages and every manufacturer vastly increase his profits. Lord Sydenham is more sure of everything than less lucky men are of anything. Among a sheaf of articles taken at random are definite and even dogmatic pronouncements on the Air Service, the Censorship, all kinds of naval and military questions, the conscientious objector, divorce, farming in India, and the Irish question. Small wonder that one of his admirer's remarks that "there are few subjects on which he is not a real authority."

Lord Sydenham's own attitude appears to be that of the American who was asked by Lincoln if he had ever commanded an army. "No," was

the reply. "Do you think you *could* command an army?" asked Lincoln. "Well," said the modest man, "I know of no reason to the contrary." Lord Sydenham sees no reason why he should not act as Adviser-General to mankind. For he does not limit himself to the British Empire. He is quite ready to suggest what "every thoughtful American" should believe, or to put on record what "intelligent Frenchmen of every class" are saying. Of course, it would be quite impossible for any Frenchman or any American to think as Lord Sydenham does. His mind is as English as a plum-pudding, or as his own handsome and rounded features. But it is the essence of Lord Sydenham's method to presume agreement where there is the most fundamental conflict. For example, it is the fashion of the moment—and Lord Sydenham, of course, follows it—to talk about capital and labour "coming together." One would imagine a precedent condition to "coming together" is to ascertain exactly what keeps capital and labour apart. Instead, Lord Sydenham simply strings together all the commonplaces current in his circle, talks loosely about patriotism, the absurdity of trade union rules, Chinese competition, German science, and American "push and go," and heads the resultant article "Problem of Production—A Practical Solution." The "solution" is that



each party should do justly by the other. It is almost as practical as the deliverance of a judge who should say, "My decision is that equity shall be observed as between the parties, and I refer the details to the learned Registrar."

On a working man, who does actually get up at five o'clock in the morning, and has actually negotiated with his employers over what he considers a just wage, this bland assumption that his *trade union rules are merely obstructive nonsense* has no effect beyond a vague irritation. It is of a piece with the tactful declarations of chiffon-clad duchesses that "we must all produce more and work very much harder in future." But it is not to the working man that Lord Sydenham addresses himself. His business is not so much to convert as to confirm, not to spread new truths but to strengthen old prejudices. It is in this sense that he is a considerable influence, and perhaps a dangerous one. What he says in effect is this: "You, the comfortable middle class, are a little upset by all this wild talk about Labour and a new world. Bless your souls, there's nothing new in it all. Leave it to us; we are past-masters in the art of 'dishing.' You may think we have managed a little badly here and there. But give us a little time, and we will bring ourselves through—and you with us. Bolshevism, and Labour Ministers, and all shall

pass away: but we shall not pass away. *Occupons nous de ce qui est eternal.*"

Lord Sydenham is quite properly severe on "class-consciousness," and in one important respect he and his like can claim a real superiority over the people they accuse of "sectionalism." Labour certainly is "class-conscious"—that is to say, a little shame-faced. It knows that its position is indefensible, and its only excuse is that it is adopted for defence. Lord Sydenham and the people he represents have no such class-consciousness, for the quite simple reason that they do not think of themselves as a class. They are England.

It is in this assumption that there is only one set of solid and legitimate interests, and that all other claims are the invention of rebels and agitators, that the chief danger to our society resides. Our ruling caste still regards the mass of the population as essentially servile. It accepts the notion of voters to be bamboozled, but refuses that of citizens to be dealt with on level terms. Every few years come the Saturnalia of a General Election, in which the lord makes obeisance to the slave; but the moment the last vote is cast the lord goes home to a bath in which he washes away every physical and moral trace of his degradation, and until a dissolution again approaches he comports himself as if affairs of the State literally concerned only a few families. Examine

everything non-technical that Lord Sydenham has written, and you will find the one fixed point in a shifting bog of inconsistencies is this—that “the people,” or “the masses,” or the “working classes,” are something to be managed by trained and intelligent people like Lord Sydenham: there is no morsel of comprehension that, after all, they might prefer to manage themselves, and not simply to vote for this or that set of masters.

Wonderful anomalies are often strangely static, and it is not for the present writer to dogmatise as to the impossibility of maintaining this narrow oligarchic temper under conditions of what almost amounts to universal suffrage. But obviously there must be some considerable strain coming to a society so constituted, and that strain will certainly not be lessened by the counsels of people so entirely satisfied with themselves and with their order as is Baron Sydenham of Combe.

## SIR ERIC GEDDES

IN the Arabian tale the genie, released by chance from the copper vase with the seal of Solomon the Wise, first took the form of a dense mist; it was only by slow degrees that the poor fishermen got to know quite what was happening.

The recent career of Sir Eric Geddes, so far as the ordinary man has been able to judge of it, has followed much the same course. First he was a discovery; then he was a myth; now the outline of him is clear enough, though there is perhaps still room for guessing in detail. Only five years ago Eric Geddes was the imprisoned djinn, in a roomy enough bottle, sealed with the seal of John Bull the Foolish, bearing the words, "Thus far, and perhaps a little farther, but not much." Deputy manager of the North-Eastern Railway, his name as powerful as an incantation from York to Berwick, he had achieved before forty almost the limit of advancement in his own line. A little luck and a great deal of ability had contributed to this result. Part of the luck, of course, consisted in being born a Scotsman; the rest was a chance encounter with a brother Scot

in some out-of-the-way corner of India. Sir George Gibb, great in the railway world, happened to meet Mr. Geddes at dinner; marked him as a man of promise; and soon after cabled him from England, "Will you take a post on the North-Eastern?" The reply flashed across the cable was, "Starting on Monday." Eric Geddes, with years of roughing it behind him, now in the Carnegie Steel Works, now in the lumber trade, now as a general utility railwayman on the Ohio and Baltimore line, latterly as the manager of a light railway through an Indian jungle—had one indisputable faculty: he knew a good thing when he saw it. Fate was kind to him, perhaps also to his country, when it put his napkin next to Sir George Gibb's, and said, "You two men ought to know each other." But fate did no more than *act the part of master of the ceremonies*; Mr. Geddes did the rest. He saw at once the chance he had waited for since he gave up the idea of the Army, and set out to fashion his own career as one of "Heaven's Swiss." However delicious the curry may have been that night, we may be sure Mr. Geddes (though ordinarily appreciative of all good things of the concrete kind) did not notice its flavour; he was thinking of quite other matters. Every Scot's porridge is salted with ambition; their mountains teach them to look high; their ancestors' habit of going barefoot on rough roads

has endowed them with a sixth sense of caution; but, having felt all clear in their path, they tread it with feet specially designed to give a firm hold. "Starting on Monday" was not the reply of an impetuous or adventurous man, but of one who had calculated all chances; the answer had probably been framed long before the question.

It is the admirable quality of the Scot, when he has got one good thing, to begin straightway to deserve a better; Eric Geddes might escape the notice of Lord Claud Hamilton, then searching these islands in vain for a man competent to manage the Great Eastern Railway, but he advanced rapidly in the confidence of his new employers, and the only limits of his ultimate promotion were clearly those of his trade. Beyond that, of course, it seemed most unlikely that he would ever go. It was nobody's business to search him for qualities meet for still higher work; it has been nobody's business for nearly a century past; what we call "democracy" has been, in fact, less favourable to the discovery of governing talent than the frankly oligarchical system of the rotten borough days. Mr. Geddes was poor; he had no great family connections; his business was to act and not to talk; he was a man of what Carlyle called the "beaverish" species, not to be thought of as a governing person.

But the coming of war brought violent changes

in the standard of values. Gold went up and paper went down. The rulers of England, forced to look everywhere for precious metal not bearing the guinea stamp, did happily succeed in finding much of it, as well as much glittering rubbish. Eric Geddes, as we now know, was one of the more fortunate discoveries. The absurd over-praise lavished on him has naturally led to some reaction. But within his own limits—and one of them is an intense anxiety for “Ma career-r-r”—there can be no doubt of his ability. Placed in charge of a great Munitions Department in 1915, he showed such talent for organisation, such energy and resource, that he was speedily made Deputy Director-General. Then, when the main difficulty became, not scarcity of men or fighting material, but the clogged transport in Franco, it was to him that the Government turned. The eye of a great judge of men had marked him as the only possible choice; and how well the ex-railway manager justified such confidence Sir Douglas Haig has put on record in his official tribute to the “great ability, organising power, and energy of the Director-General of Transportation.” Like Cæsar, Mr. Geddes came, he saw, he overcame; difficulties disappeared before his masterful intelligence; and by the time he returned to England, a knight and a Major-General, the great problem was solved.

Sir Eric Geddes in his Vice-Admiral's uniform is a less certain figure; here we are really in the region of myth; things were done under him, but how far he was chief agent, how far the mere instrument of a policy, who shall yet say? But the real man undoubtedly emerges as the first Minister of Ways and Communications. In that character the public sees, on a well-lighted stage, the qualities which have counted in the action behind the scenes. Sir Eric Geddes is emphatically the Artist as Organiser. In regard to material things, he has the same sort of instinct which distinguishes Marshal Foch from a clever Brigadier, Mr. Sargent from Mr. Velasquez Brown, R.B.A., the scientific actuary from the accountant, the great writer from the mere literary man. He is the master of his materials, and not their slave. He gives everything its just value; distinguishes the vital from the non-essential; feels and tastes a problem rather than reasons about it. When he spoke about the Navy one felt somehow that this instinct, if not absent, was at least inactive; when he speaks about transport the impression is of a man who sees the finished result just as clearly as Phidias saw Zeus in the block of unhewn marble. There is no lordlier spectacle than the man who understands his job supremely well, and intelligent men who have worked with Sir Eric Geddes are more and more enthusiastic all the more



convincing because it is generally expressed with a certain limitation; they would have the cobbler stick to his last, and give a little shiver of outraged connoisseurship when he travels, as he has done on occasion, into general politics. There the genie abruptly descends from the Arabian Nights' level to that of Mr. Anstey's magicians; the classic becomes the middle-classic.

Being an artist in his own line, Sir Eric has *some trace of the artistic temperament*; he is a sensitive man, easily irritated by criticism, and by no means insensible to flattery; he wants managing, and is best managed when he knows nothing of the process. Being a Scot, he is cautious in self affairs, and there is no more sentiment about him than about his professor brother. No man believes more firmly that the labourer—above a certain social level—is worthy of his hire. This caution was shown in his so long preferring as paymaster the North-Eastern Railway to the State, and it was probably only after a severe mental struggle that (even with a most advantageous agreement in his safe) he made up his mind to exchange one master for forty-five millions. Whether, from that special point of view, he was wise in making his election depends on the sincerity of our conversion to reasonable politics. If we really want Reconstruction here is an invaluable instrument in one

important department. What Sir Eric Geddes thinks about things in general is of the smallest consequence; what he knows about railways and organisation on the great scale is of the largest possible moment. Sir Eric Geddes is a test case. The whole virtue of him is that he is master of a particular business, and has energy and imagination for that. He is not to be trusted—no men should be trusted—with unlimited powers. Above all he should be sternly estopped from any excursions beyond his own department. But if he is allowed (irrespective of party vicissitudes, and without the obligation to perform party services) to do the work which nobody, probably, can do so well, it will be a fair augury of the reality not of government by “business men” (which is sure to be bad), but by men who know their business, which is quite another thing.

## MR. FRANK BRANGWYN, R.A.

BEHIND a high and rather forbidding wall in a street off the Broadway at Hammersmith, where few prospects please and most of the architecture is vile, stands one of those long, low Georgian houses, a few years ago common in every older suburb, against which the flat speculator has waged a war of extermination. From the front door one can hear the wail of a baby in the flats opposite, but behind is cool verdure, and the waving of old elms.

This house serves as dwelling-place and atelier to Mr. Frank Brangwyn, who recently became a member of the Royal Academy. Here Mr. Brangwyn may sometimes be seen bending over an acid bath; the proofs from that plate are all bespoken at the rate of shillings to the square inch. Here, at another time, he receives outlandish-looking visitors, who bring him rarities in the way of Bokhara rugs and ancient Persian pottery. Here he will talk art to sympathetic listeners, and maintain a masterly silence in the presence of fashionable faddists whom his common-sense virility disapproves. Here, occa-

sionally, great personages descend on him; one wonders what they really make of the artist, who is quite innocent of Courts and their ways, and knows only man as man, and art as a form of work. For Mr. Brangwyn, while wholly unable to define his politics, is essential democrat to the marrow of him, though, unlike the accredited democrats, he has a deep love of distinction in any form.

In one sense this house, a cool oasis of antique dignity in a desert of modern brick-and-mortar, symbolises its tenant. For Mr. Brangwyn owes his distinction as an artist to a singular and happy mingling of intense modernism in externals with the faith and spirit of a long time past. He is a man of the Middle Ages in trousers; and the more really one because he has no positive objection to the trousers. Indeed, there could be nothing more authentically twentieth century than the outer man of Mr. Brangwyn. He is not, indeed, a typically English figure. The full, florid, bearded face might well belong to some prosperous Brussels tradesman; it is the kind of face one often used to see on a Sunday afternoon in the Bois de la Cambre, placid and eupeptic, beaming alternately on a highly comfortable Bock and a highly comfortable wife. For Mr. Brangwyn, though of Welsh descent, was born at Bruges, and has more than a suggestion of the

once fat land of Flanders. He is rather the Continental bourgeois than the English middle-class man, but with as little artistic affectation as either; if ever he were seen in a velvet jacket it must have been very early in his career, and his taste in ties is as sober as a bank director's. Nobody, of course, could possibly mistake him for a bank director, or for any kind of business man; there is a faint note of the Bohemian with all his rectitude; and you feel that he takes no real joy in his trouser crease. But if there is no enthusiasm there is no revolt. Mr. Brangwyn accepts the conventions as he accepts every other external of the twentieth century; his only revenge is to go a little farther back spiritually. It is the same with his work. He is content to take as his raw materials the Hammersmith street, or the chimneys of the nearest power-house, or the electric cranes on the river-side. He does not regret the existence of John Smith, the trade unionist, or complain that he does not spell himself Jehan and belong to a mediæval guild; but uses him, dirty collar, sloppy tweeds, trade unionism, and all—and somehow gets a rare dignity out of him, while telling the essential truth. Such a man as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, both as poet and painter, remained a Victorian with a squint, despite his laboured efforts at archaism, because he tried to keep one eye on

*the nineteenth century and one on the twelfth. Mr. Brangwyn has both eyes on the twentieth, but his soul is in the twelfth. He is one with the old masters, because he is so vitally of his own time.*

The Academy has honoured itself by honouring the least academic of living artists. But one wonders how Mr. Brangwyn feels in that gallery; he is like some great wolf-hound on view among a lot of sleek Italian greyhounds. His whole outlook on art is the very antithesis of the average R.A.'s. The Academy remains true to its origin. It was founded chiefly with the view of giving a status to those who supplied a British demand for pretty things, or who painted the portraits of the British aristocracy; and it has so little departed from that rather servile tradition that nine people out of ten think of an Academician as necessarily a successful painter of easel pictures, and were considerably astonished when an architect was chosen President. (Perhaps not altogether unnaturally, architecture was not commonly conceived as an art.) This attitude is the culmination of a movement now more than four hundred years old. Mr. Chesterton has acutely pointed out the essential difference between the objects of art before and after the Renaissance. Mediæval art was popular; the blaze of colour inside a cathedral and the riot of fantastic shape outside

were the work of artists who had Tom, Dick, and Harry in view; they were not meant to please a small and specialised class, but to appeal to everybody. They were the uncommon man's gift to common men. But with the Renaissance there came, by a variety of incidental causes, a change in feeling. The artist, like the soldier, became a true mercenary. Art became an aristocratic and exclusive concern. Its appeal narrowed; it forsook the streets for the mansions; it spent on a nobleman's goblet the pains that once went to the decoration of a market cross. In succeeding centuries we have fine landscapes, marvellous portraits, silver-work and faience that are a delight to the connoisseur; but there is a definite good-bye to the greatest in things that cannot go into a remover's van.

Mr. Brangwyn is truly of the mediævals because to the centre of his being he rebels against this limitation of art. He painted easel pictures to make money and amuse himself; he sometimes paints them still for amusement. He delights in etching, which more than amuses him. But his real heart is in the art that cannot be kept in a portfolio or used to give a false note to a dining-room. He is above all, and in the widest sense, a decorator, and there must be moments in his life when he regrets that he was born six centuries too late to do the best that is in him. His

imagination glows with visions of real English cities (not the ordinary aggregation of slum and suburb), ruled by men jealous for their beauty as well as for their wealth, filled with enthusiasm for the common life, in which art would take its place as no extraneous thing, but as an impulse governing every corporate activity. In such cities it would indeed be well that the chief citizens should delight in filling their houses with the best that the easel painter could produce; there is a legitimate domestic and intimate side to art; but the true work of a great genius would be, as in the distant past, for Everyman; work which could not serve as gambling counters for the speculator, or certificates of taste for the millionaire, but would remain for centuries a reminder to citizens of the glories of their past.

It is the enormous insensibility of his countrymen to art as a vital thing, touching life at all points, that makes Mr. Brangwyn's considerable world success not a little ironical to him. There is a constant and lucrative market for the pictures he does not want to paint, since the days are long past when a five-pound note was of consequence to the self-taught artist who had roughed it before the mast, and vagabondised it in many remote parts of the globe. But there is little demand in this country for the work he would like to do for it. With a half-humorous sigh he



will talk to you of proffered foreign commissions, and of the English orders that so seldom come. England only wants of Mr. Brangwyn what Mr. Brangwyn does not want to do for England. The English shopkeeper who controls our municipalities probably never heard his name; in any case knows him only as a picture painter. He cannot complain of want of success. His name is respected by the print sellers, at Christic's, and everywhere where pictures are sold. It is no case of a neglected genius; only the sadder case of a misused one. For Frank Brangwyn, properly employed, would be less an individual painter than an institution. He would be a master on the old plan, with a host of pupils carrying out his designs. In such a capacity he might have filled the public buildings of England with feasts of form and colour which would have brought us pilgrims from everywhere for centuries to come. Instead, much of his best work can only be seen abroad, and perhaps the best of all remains undone.

## DEAN INGE

THERE are few more striking objects than a Dean in his curious hat and breeches, which tempt the speculative mind to Teufelsdröckhian lines of thought that need not be here specified. Yet when you see the Very Reverend William Ralph Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, you think of him first as a very remarkable human being, and only secondly as a dignitary of the Church. It is not often that a conspicuously clothed figure is so completely cancelled by the force of the face.

It is not an animated face; indeed, its singular impressiveness is chiefly due to the absence of any positive feeling. Its owner seems to have as little relation to the life around him as if he were a ghost. In its curious mingling of lifelessness and significance the face suggests not so much flesh and blood as wood carved by some great craftsman for a mediæval cathedral. One used to see such faces decorating the choir-stalls in the great Flemish churches—the saints on one side, the persecutors of the Church on the other. On which side this particular face should appear might seem a little doubtful. There have been saints who looked much the same, saints who

went doggedly to the lions not for any human reason, but over some question of mere theological parsing—not for the Word, but for the due grammatical expression of the Word. And there have been saint-killers who looked much the same, men who slew not because they were brutes, but because they were pedants.

It is, in short, the face of a quiet fanatic, whose main trouble is that he has nothing very obvious to be fanatical about. Dean Inge is certainly no fanatic in religious matters. Therein he tends to rather extreme latitudinarianism. He is disposed to look for truth beyond the limits of the Christian doctrines, and has expressed a respect for the faiths of the East which would have infallibly brought him into trouble half a century ago. It would be an exaggeration to say with Mr. Chesterton (in his haste) that “he holds a high seat in that modern Parliament of religions where all believers respect each other’s unbelief,” and that he has “absently-minded strayed into the wrong Continent and the wrong creed.” But that such a thing could be said of the Dean at all may serve to indicate the breadth of his religious views.

But fanaticism that is in the bone will out in the flesh, and the Dean is undoubtedly a fanatic in things political and sociological. He hates with a consuming hatred something that he calls

"democracy." He has denounced in withering terms those of his brethren who toy with Socialism. They are "Court Chaplains of King Demos," and worshippers of "the silliest of all fetishes" that man has ever set up. The "masses" get no flattery from Dean Inge. "Any dead dog," he says, "can float with the stream"; he prefers to go against the modern current of majority-worship. "Men in masses," he tells us, "are nearly always guided by selfish interests." "If we ally ourselves with mankind in the lump we ally ourselves with mankind at the worst." He looks on the British working man as inspired with a desire to "loot the accumulations of Queen Victoria's reign," and warns him constantly that the Chinese and Japanese, working longer hours for much less pay, will "cut us out." Democracy is "wasteful, inefficient, and generally corrupt." Democratic governments "yield before every agitation and pay blackmail to every conspiracy," and under them those who pay taxes are "systematically pillaged." Finally, he thinks there is a danger that the working classes, spoiled as they have been, flattered and deceived, will "become vicious and upset the coach."

Now all this (a certain distinction of diction apart) sounds very much like the nonsense talked by the ordinary flustered tradesman or country gentleman in a time of Labour "unrest." If one

did not know the Dean, and had no idea of the very deep things he has discussed with a quite unusual clarity and discernment, one might diagnose a panic fear for the Very Reverend dinner, or the Very Reverend stipend, or the Very Reverend dividends. But Dean Inge is wholly disinterested. He cares nothing about money, food, or society; lives like an anchorite; is a man used to severe thought, of quite masculine intellect, and perfectly honest and fearless. He must mean something more than the ordinary member of the Anti-Socialist Union. What is it?

The Dean seems to suffer from two disabilities. The first is that he has lived nearly all his life in rooms at Eton and Oxford and at the Deanery, where he has never come into touch with the average of mankind. It is true, I believe, that he was for a short time a parish clergyman somewhere in Kensington, and that he even held a weekly class for chambermaids at the Hyde Park Hotel. What he made of the chambermaids and what the chambermaids made of him, only he and the chambermaids may say. His interest in them seems to belie the impression most people have gathered from his St. Paul's sermons, of a man verging on the inhuman. But it remains true that on the whole Dean Inge's contact with common mankind is slight, and of course his deafness is for him one dividing wall the more.

Forced, then, to judge largely by printed matter, it is hardly surprising that he is less than just to the working man; the best part of the working man is not vocal. But the main trouble is that the Dean really does not know what democracy means. I should hesitate to say such a thing of such a man did his numerous references to the subject leave any room for doubt. He always speaks of democracy as a system of government actually existing in England, though he, himself, the Dean of St. Paul's, is a living proof to the contrary. For if a plebiscite were taken to-morrow on the question: "Do you sincerely wish that William Ralph Inge shall continue to dress in a singular kind of silk hat, with other queer appurtenances to match, or would you prefer that something else were done with the money?" is it conceivable that there would be an affirmative majority?

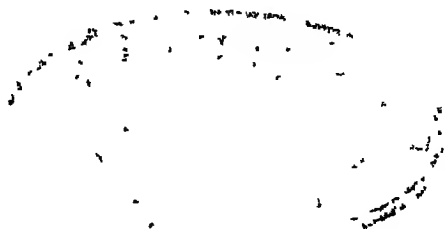
I will therefore disregard all the tirades against something which may be very bad, but which is clearly not democracy, and turn to points on which Dean Inge has something to say really valuable. He does stand, in some imperfect, warped, but not unintelligible way, for one very excellent (and very democratic) ideal, the dignity of man as man. He is against the herd theory of mankind; he asserts the majesty of the individual soul. Running through all his diatribes

against Socialism is the one sound thought expressed in his homely metaphor: "Socialism seeks to make the sty more important than the pig, whereas the pig is more important than the sty." Men are not to be saved materially or spiritually by platoons, as Charlemagne's Saxons were baptised. There are no classes and no masses, only men honest and dishonest, industrious and lazy; and no scheme of "reform," however cunningly contrived, will succeed unless the individual is touched to finer things. It is at this point that the famous "gloom" of the Dean really does come in. He has no faith in the average man; no faith in him as he is, and little faith in his capacity to become something better. There is a touch of the Calvinist in this ultra-liberal Churchman; he seems to regard the mass as spiritual as well as economic Gibeonites. It would be interesting to have a sermon from him on the Penitent Thief. Whatever he might admit or deny in theory, practically he believes that Christians will never be more than a minority. He seems, indeed, convinced that the greater part of mankind, if not better dead, would be better unborn; on that side of him he is distinctly the "insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust."

It is not a very hopeful doctrine, or for that matter a very Christian one. But the Dean him-

self, well understood, is neither un-christian nor a pessimist; and, though perhaps a rather depressing influence, he is no unhealthy one. He only over-states truths which are habitually understated just now. Many people have got into the habit of thinking that you can get out of a really well contrived mill more than you put in, that zero multiplied by a million makes a good round sum, and that a good crop of figs may be confidently expected from well-cultivated thistles. Dean Inge, with much irrelevance and a rather irritating shrillness, simply points out that it will not do. That is the essence of his message; it is negative, but not unimportant.

Unfortunately he has little sense of humour; he suffers more than most men from the reporter who wrenches emphatic sentences from their context; and thus the value of his contribution is considerably diminished. It is a pity. For he really has stuff in him, and courage of his kind is rare in this rather flabby age.





## SIR JOHN SIMON

To every successful lawyer-politician there arrives a day when he has to make a final choice between the two careers. From the hill of his eminence he can see on the one side the narrow but rich domain of legal preferment, with its dignity and security, but also with its dullness; on the other lies a mysterious uncharted region, half Golconda and half Golgotha, guarded by enchantments like those of the Arabian tales, a region where the stout adventurer with the proper clue may gain fierce delights and more than royal splendours, but where also a wrong word or a false step may turn him into a black stone, or a miserable one-eyed calendar, scorned and pitied of all.

Such a day arrived to Sir John Simon in the early summer of 1915. After a prodigious career at the bar and the kind of success in political law-officership which proves nothing, the parting of the ways lay before him. A man of just over forty, he could have the Woolsack for the asking, and spend the rest of his life in splendid mediocrity. Or he could choose a political post subject to all the dangers and vicissitudes of a specially dis-

turbed and uncertain epoch. The confidence with which the young and comparatively untried statesman scorned delights and chose laborious days may or may not have been justified. But, whatever else the decision meant, it implied in Sir John Simon ambitions of the very highest. In taking the Home Secretaryship under the first Coalition he did in effect proclaim himself a future claimant of the Premiership. It is, therefore, as a possible future Prime Minister, and by no lower standard, that we have to appraise as best we can the qualities of a rather enigmatic figure.

It is almost a commonplace to describe Sir John Simon as a rather slighter Asquith, and undeniably the comparison is in some important particulars just. Both men are distinguished by a singular clarity of brain, by conspicuous lucidity of expression, and by a rigid parsimony of phrase. Though acute, they are by no means great original thinkers; they are content, lawyer-like, to assume first principles, and treat eminently arguable propositions as if they possessed the authority of the law delivered from Sinai. Neither is disposed to adventure; an essential conservatism underlies the Radicalism of Sir John Simon no less than the Whiggism of Mr. Asquith. Like Mr. Asquith, Sir John Simon would never consciously bring about a revolution; but, if a revolution came his way, he would probably display Mr. Asquith's

gift of concealing its character under a cloak of studious moderation. Both men shun emotionalism as the last vulgarity; and in both this fastidiousness is not solely a matter of taste; it comes partly of temperamental deficiency.

Like his elder, Sir John Simon was an instant success in politics, and in law came to the front still more rapidly than his elder. At Oxford he was recognised as a youth with a great future. The story goes that he and Lord Birkenhead tossed up which party they should join, since no party could be big enough to hold both. It was the same at the bar; young Simon simply came, saw, and conquered. Within a very few years of his call the British Government was his client, and his income was only exceeded by one or two men very much his senior. The monotonous tale of almost mechanical success was repeated in the House of Commons. Less than four years after he came in for Walthamstow on the great Liberal wave of 1906, Sir John, still well on the sunny side of forty, was appointed Solicitor-General. It all reads very much like a summary of Mr. Asquith's earlier history. Add that, like Mr. Asquith, Sir John comes from a Nonconformist stock—his father was a Congregational minister—and the parallel is superficially complete.

But difference in degree often amounts to difference in kind, and such a difference exists

in this case. Sir John Simon stands to his leader in the relation of a "school picture" to a great master; the very points of resemblance only emphasise the gulf that divides the two. It is quite true that in some respects the younger man has the advantage of the elder. He has earned fees such as Mr. Asquith never pocketed. Mr. Asquith was never an advocate of quite the first class, and an advocate of the first class Sir John Simon undeniably is. Working with methods quite different from Sir Edward Carson's, he has the same sort of power over judges, juries, and witnesses. His instinct for the weak side of an opponent's case is infallible; he has a great gift of plausibility; and, despite the gentleness of his manner, he can be ruthlessness itself when he likes. The almost preternatural gravity of his demeanour, coupled with a singularly winning manner, gently insinuating without a touch of servility, has no doubt helped. Without attaching to deportment all the importance assigned to it by Lord Chesterfield and Mr. Turveydrop, we should be foolish to deny to externals their full weight. "If," says Halifax, "the judges on the Bench should, instead of their furs, which signify gravity and bespeak respect, be clothed like the jockeys at Newmarket, or wear jack-boots and Steenkirks, they would not in reality have less law, but it would be a great while before mankind

would think it possible to receive justice from men so accoutred." Some part of the high respect paid to Sir John Simon's learning and intellect may be the effect, perhaps, of his precocious sobriety. He looks wiser than any man is likely to be, and, though he smiles on all, he enjoys the mysterious power so often attaching to a man who is never surprised into a laugh.

Though a great advocate, Sir John Simon is hardly a great lawyer. Neither, it may be said, is Mr. Asquith. But there is this difference between the two men. One feels that Sir John Simon has got the most out of himself, while the best in Mr. Asquith is still undeveloped. It can hardly be doubted that Mr. Asquith, had he kept to law, might have rivalled the highest reputations. The faculty which has made him so great a Parliamentarian of his own special and peculiar class would have enabled him, had politics not claimed him, to go down to history as a great judge. Mr. Asquith has, moreover, many of the qualities of a great man. But somehow, greatness of any kind is difficult to associate with Sir John Simon. Carlyle would have seized on him as the type of the compact, "most articulate," small man, whom he used to compare with his favourite "questionable" Mirabeaus and Dantons. There is certainly nothing in Sir John Simon round which to weave a legend. He is far too

respectable. No one would say of him, as Bardolph of Falstaff, "Would I were with him, whether in Heaven or in Hell." The very industrious apprentice gets most of the good things of life, but not all, and one thing he often misses is the hearty love of his fellow-men. If things go right with him, Sir John Simon will no doubt have a large and interested retinue. But unless he changes more than would seem possible, he is likely to prove a very indifferent leader of a forlorn hope. It used to be said that in Fox's time the Whig party went to the House of Commons in a four-wheeler. The quip was meant to express contempt for the feebleness of the Opposition, but a subtle kind of compliment to its sincerity and solidarity was unconsciously implied; the four seats were occupied by four men, who thoroughly liked and trusted each other, and were prepared to sink or swim together. If Sir John Simon were at the head of a Liberal party in similar straits the members would arrive in at least two separate taxi-cabs.

For Sir John Simon—though a keen politician and an honest one (did not the resignation over conscription prove at least that ?)—conspicuously lacks the qualities that inspire a warm personal loyalty. It is, indeed, a marked deficiency in Liberal leaders generally since Mr. Lloyd George became—whatever he has become. The division of

labour was long carried to an unwholesome length. It was Mr. George's special department to tickle the ears of the groundlings; and rather foolishly that department was viewed with some degree of contempt by men of the Asquith school. They looked on eloquence of the Limehouse kind much in the same light as the dropping of an aspirate. They over-appreciated dull matter, and unjustly appraised good patter: nay, more, they were led into the very serious error of thinking that the master of patter must necessarily be as empty as a drum because he makes the noise of one. They forgot that an Alfred Butt is more easily supplied than a Harry Lauder, and that in politics, as elsewhere, one touch of genius is worth much respectable ability. To do the Conservative leaders justice, hostility never interfered with their artistic appreciation of Mr. Lloyd George's gifts. They recognised from the first his value as an asset. It was a cynical recognition, of course: they were only thinking of him as the race-course comedian who keeps the crowd in a roar, while practitioners with silent talents are going through its pockets. But Mr. George was always more admired by his enemies than his friends, and now they have him—or is it that he has them? Mr. Asquith would have been better advised either to have bound Mr. George by hoops of steel, or to have left him a less complete monopoly in his

own line. It is an example of the way in which a very astute and able man may be misled by his own personal preferences. Mr. Asquith, temperamentally unsympathetic to the Georgian type, decided that one was quite enough in that genre, and sought his other colleagues among men of his own intellectual habit, forgetting that it takes all sorts to make a world. Thus it arrived that in a situation where popular appeal was of the first importance the orthodox Liberal party was led by a singularly monotonous group of men, not one of whom had the power of swaying an audience, though each was heard with respect in the House of Commons. Sir John Simon, Mr. McKenna, Mr. Runciman, Mr. Samuel, Mr. Asquith himself, had in common one deficiency: there was not a vibrant note in their whole register.

Apart from his chief, Sir John Simon is by far the most notable of the company, and probably he alone offers the possibility of any considerable development. Under the stimulus of adversity, reserve powers which may have been atrophied by early and easy success will perhaps declare themselves. So far he has only mastered a party brief; in the cold shades he may be led to discover a true gospel, and the man to preach it. For the moment he stands only for a great but incomplete personal success, represented by a



resounding forensic fame, a political reputation far less assured, and a handsome little country place near Banbury, where he sees the few intimates who know the real man. That real man will remain to the ordinary public a slightly distrusted mystery until he begins to develop a great enthusiasm. Perhaps, after all, he has not had time. Under fifty one is still young.

## SIR ALBERT STANLEY

It is commonly imputed to the Englishman, sometimes as a defect but oftener as a virtue, that though he changes his skies his mind and habits are unalterable. He is never, we are told, so much an Englishman as when away from England, and the longer he remains abroad the more stubbornly he clings to every jot and tittle of the unwritten law of the English.

But however true this may be, it is by no means universally true. Indeed, a certain type of Englishman has always been noted for the ease with which he responds to environment, and often even overdoes the Roman when he happens to be in Rome. Houston Stewart Chamberlain is by no means a solitary example of the denationalised Briton. Americans reserve their sarcasm for the "Britisher" who insists on demanding Wiltshire bacon in Chicago, and calling for Bass's ale in Milwaukee. But they might exploit as rich a field of satire in the immigrant who becomes in two years a greater hustler than Mr. Henry Ford, and more slangy than Mr. George Ade. The Englishman in America either lives in per-

petual rebellion against the American idea or surrenders to it unconditionally. Sir Albert Stanley, quite naturally, belongs to the latter class. He was very young when he was taken to the United States; he owes to the State of Michigan most of his education, and all his success in life; and it is rather as an American than as a Briton that he must be judged. For he speaks through the nose a little, and thinks through the nose a great deal. His whole attitude to life breathes that strange and almost terrifying simplicity so common in the American colossus of business. He is absorbed in the contemplation of "efficiency of organisation" as an end in itself. One of his admirers has called him a "human dynamo generating efficiency kilowatts at top speed." A more reverent mind might rather describe him as one of the devotees of the modern faith of "progress," which demands of its holders a monastic concentration on one purpose and an enormous innocence regarding everything else.

Sir Albert Stanley, it is hardly necessary to say, has no connection with the Earl of Derby. He belongs to an old but obscure Derbyshire family of the name of Knathries. His father, on going to the United States, found the name hard for people to spell and to remember, and out of consideration for American weakness adopted an aristocratic British cognomen. Young Stanley

developed with truly American rapidity. He was almost a boy when he undertook the organisation of the tramway system of Detroit, the "pioneer city" of electric traction. He was a very young man when he was called to a larger field in the State of New Jersey. He was still quite a young man when he took in hand, as the representative of American interests, the remodelling of the whole system of underground travel in London. How he "linked up" the tubes and shallow railways and the omnibus and tramway companies, by a complicated process of bargaining, new construction, conversion and "speeding up," is now a matter of London and railway history. Regarded simply as a job, it was something of a miracle to bring about in so short a time so sweeping a revolution. In little things as well as great the changes bore the impress of an Americanised personality. The old underground railways were merely replicas in miniature of the great lines. They were official and starchy in their attitude to the public. They called their stations by the names of non-existent or obscure streets, and carefully hid them away from the countryman and the foreigner. They took for granted a knowledge of London, and made no allowance for human stupidity. They never advertised the beauties of the districts they served, and seemed to care little whether they carried

few or many passengers to "beechy Bucks" or "orchard land." The new mind changed all that with the curious result that Sir Albert Stanley as a railway man was imploring people to "sleep in the country," while as President of the Board of Trade he was making it very hard for them to do so.

To Sir Albert Stanley's personal success we may pay a cheerful tribute. He has most emphatically "made good." A stranger, almost a foreigner, he has in a few years become one of the "very big men" of business London, and during a very critical period he was, on less obvious grounds, regarded as one of the indispensables of Westminster. As a beginner in politics, he exercised more power than any previous occupant of his post, and used it with the decision of a dictator. He was, of course, qualified by his experience as a railway director. In raising fares by fifty per cent., he knew well enough that, however people might grumble, they must pay. In cutting down accommodation, he had the fortifying assurance, from previous knowledge, of the compressibility of the human frame. A less experienced man might have hesitated before the risk of some terrible accident to a packed suburban train in a London tunnel. He knew that accidents are so improbable that the risk might well be taken. As to the effect of such conveyance on the health of London—

well, Sir Albert Stanley was not in Harley Street for other people's health, or in Whitehall for his own; he was there to do a certain job, and he did it. He viewed a question of transport as an expert on transport, and rightly estimated that British patriotism would stand a very considerable pressure to the square inch.

It cannot be denied that in raising fares and decreasing accommodation Sir Albert Stanley showed great skill; no non-professional man could have gone so far past the danger-line without disaster. But his failure in other matters—for, diplomatic pretences notwithstanding, it was failure which led to his singular withdrawal from active work on the Board of Trade—shows that the kind of ability which may be sometimes useful in emergency is not necessarily the kind which is best adapted to the normal needs of society. In this case there was a certain specialised talent and little beyond. Outside his own small world Sir Albert Stanley was revealed as limited and a little puzzle-headed, and he rather signally illustrates the real defects of "business" people in office. The objection to the "business man" in government is not so much the fear that he will let private interests influence him in dealing with public affairs. It is not so much the possible bad side of him, but the certain good side of him, that the public has to fear. It is true that the ancients,

in appointing a single god to look after the interest of merchants and robbers, showed much of their usual acuteness. Modern politeness has separated the classes, but they are not always so sharply divided as might be wished. Every trade is a sort of conspiracy against the public, and the huge combines have a specially predatory character. Still, there is something which theologians call "the grace of station," which no doubt operates when the great privateer takes charge of a King's ship, and we have no right to assume, in the absence of proof, that business men will, as a general rule, *consciously take advantage of their situation as Ministers of the Crown*. The real danger is something much more subtle.

The business man is necessarily a narrow man, and a short-sighted man. The greater business man he is, the more likely is he to be an unsafe guide in public policy. Even in matters of his own calling it is the common experience to find him lacking in perspective. Most people know to their cost what it means to trust the judgment of a stockbroker as to permanent investments. There was a time when everybody was advised to buy Consols at 114; there was another time when Chartered shares were considered a desirable "lock-up" at eight times their face value; there was still another period when "anything foreign" was pushed at the expense of the most solid British

securities. Every business man, like the Archbishop of Canterbury, was convinced of the "necessity" of Chinese labour in South Africa, only, being quite without "sentimental nonsense," he did not think it "regrettable." And, at the present moment, there are strictly business notions in strictly business heads which, if adopted, would infallibly lead to great calamities.

The weakness is fundamental. Business is concerned with but one thing—profit more or less immediate. What is called long sight in a business man ranges over a period whose extreme limit is, perhaps, forty or fifty years—that is to say, a mere half-hour by the clock of history. Statesmanship is—or should be—concerned as much with the future as with the past or the present. Moreover, the business mind inevitably tends to waste in the larger sense, though it may be deeply concerned in apparent economies. When a fool talks of a fire as "good for trade" he is only expressing crudely the business philosophy that regards with such complacency that creation of new wants which is often the equivalent of waste. It would be good business from this point of view to exhaust all the coal in South Wales in twenty years, and drain the world of its petroleum in thirty. It is quite possible, in view of the state of things which the war has left in its wake, that all the energies of rulers will



have to be bent on the restriction of production in certain undesirable directions. But we have the whole business world talking of the importance of "increasing production" without the smallest reference to what is produced; they are full of "capturing" this trade or that, and preach an accentuation of "efficiency" on capitalistic lines as if the industrial system of the nineteenth century were necessarily immortal.

That Sir Albert Stanley has much of this simplicity was shown by his fathering of the once much-discussed British Trade Corporation scheme, which was unkindly described by a Member of the House of Commons as a string of bucket-shops to be given control of our commerce. It is not an uncommon thing for the great business man to act first and think afterwards; Sir Albert Stanley certainly did so in this case. There was assuredly no sinister intent behind his advocacy; but the cobbler retains always his belief that there is nothing like leather, and it is to be assumed that the President of the Board of Trade was genuinely surprised that even the House of Commons was appalled at the naked character of this scheme of capitalistic exploitation. But one point is worth noting; he had hypnotised the Cabinet into accepting it. That illustrates one of the great dangers of the clever business man in office. He is seldom wanting in a crude and

materialistic sort of patriotism; he is never deficient in ideas of a kind; he is usually masterful in character; and there is a real risk of his dominating men more inert and less contriving, unless they are fortified by what he chiefly lacks, a grip on first principles.

Every illusion brings its appropriate penalty. And there is no greater illusion than the current notion that the hand that rocks the cradle of a combine is the hand to rule the world.

## MR. F. S. OLIVER

"SIR," said Dr. Johnson to a dullard, "I can supply you with an argument; I cannot furnish you with an understanding."

The quotation may serve to indicate the usefulness of Mr. Frederick Scott Oliver to the party which, on the whole, commands what respect he has to spare for the mere politician. From time to time he supplies the Unionists with quite excellent arguments, which they use as bricks to throw at their opponents. But the bricks, once thrown, have served their purpose. No attempt is made to turn them to constructive uses. It would be unfair to judge the brick-maker by these stray products. For a reasonable appraisal one must turn to the modest but far from jerry-built temple of philosophy which Mr. Oliver has himself erected. In other words, one must read his excellent "Alexander Hamilton" and his better-known but much less noteworthy war-book, "Ordeal by Battle."

What are Keats? Who, I seem to hear, is Mr. F. S. Oliver? The question sounds natural or grotesque, according to the place in which it

is asked. Mr. Oliver is no recluse, but he does not seek notoriety, and is both very well and very little known. He is warmly esteemed in certain small sets whose opinion he values, but he cares very little for the world at large. In one sense he is a curiosity: a barrister who seldom loses an opportunity of denouncing lawyers, and a business man (he is a director of Debenham's and other companies) who writes excellent English. Of good middle-class birth, he was educated in the most expensive English fashion, and has always moved in one or two of the innumerable subdivisions of the "best" people. Among military men his acquaintance is large; he was an intimate and confidant of the late Lord Roberts. One can quite understand the affection inspired by "the best little great good man that ever girded a sword by his side." But, indeed, Mr. Oliver seems to have all the student's fervour for the military caste generally. He is almost an English Treitschke in his sedentary enthusiasm for soldiers and soldiering.

But he has also his own literary and journalistic set—amiable, not unthoughtful, quite genteel people who think Lord Milner the greatest of modern statesmen, and writhe in secret over the political misery that gives them a bed-fellow like Mr. Lloyd George. At Trinity he made the acquaintance of many men since eminent in one

little world or another, and he counts certain staid but influential politicians among his friends. A few youngsters of talent have sat at his feet; he is often consulted by serious men on serious questions; and hundreds of speakers talk him without having heard his name.

Much of the fashionable contempt for the House of Commons, much of the vague yearning for some political rearrangement which will lessen the influence of the people of England in the management of their own affairs and those of the Empire, is traceable to Mr. Oliver. "One vote, one value," was the old-fashioned Unionist rejoinder to the Radical "One man, one vote." One cannot appropriately call any utterance of Mr. Oliver a "cry." He is far too well-bred for over-emphasis. But his equivalent to a cry is "All votes no particular value." He has little belief in the sovereign people. He turns his back decisively on the Victorian Radical belief in the ballot-box and progressive enfranchisement. He deplores the professional politician. He is especially suspicious of the eminent K.C. whose stock-in-trade as a legislator is only "an experience of human affairs made up of an infinite number of scraps cut out of other people's lives." Turning to the future, he sees as little hope as Carlyle did in the leadership by men who are mostly windbags of men who are mostly fools. He believes

in the strong silent man who does things, generally things of which the majority disapproves. When Mr. Lloyd George talks of government by experts, he is only saying briefly what Mr. Oliver spreads over hundreds of pages of close argument and apt illustration.

Quite apart from any moral considerations, Mr. Oliver is far too intelligent to pay unreasoning tribute to the system of the late German Empire. It too obviously depended on the littleness of its citizens for the greatness of the State. The general docility that made the German people so terrible an instrument of crime is paralleled in no other white race; a mould so constrictive would have split if applied to a more obdurate material. But it would probably be fair to say that Mr. Oliver is friendly to the Prussian ideal as adapted to British peculiarities. At any rate, he is a great admirer of Japan, the Asiatic equivalent of Prussia—Japan, where “a mass of intelligent humanity, reckless of their lives, yet filled with the joy of life,” is “eager for distinction, hungry for success, alert, practical, and merry; but at the same time subordinate, humbly and piously subordinate, to a pure abstraction.” Mr. Oliver is here obviously judging the great Japanese experiment largely on hearsay evidence. Otherwise he would not lay so much stress on one aspect of it. Those who have watched on the

spot the wonderful drama of Japanese imperial and industrial expansion are less impressed with the gaiety of the process. The joy of life is not the most outstanding characteristic of factory life of Osaka or Nagoya. These people sing at their work, but not from merriment; it is simply that they cannot work without singing. No man who has seen a ship coaled by thousands of unsexed girls, or who has watched a great Japanese cotton-mill discharging its operatives after their day's work, will share Mr. Oliver's impression of a buoyant people. He will rather feel how "Western methods" have added a deeper tinge of gloom to the habitual sadness of the Oriental.

But this has little relevance to the main matter. The happiness of the individual has no place in Mr. Oliver's philosophy. To use one of his own figures, his ideal is not the bee, but the hive. The individual citizen is of small consequence; the Leviathan of the State is all. To him the one vice of the British world is that which is often acclaimed, noisily enough, as its chief virtue. There is no "sovereignty." Mr. Oliver could thrill like another at the sight of hundreds of thousands of young men scrambling to the colours in 1914 and 1915; but though it might be magnificent, it was not Government; they should all have been in their places, duly drilled and subordinated, long before the war came. "Advertising for an

Army " fills him with contempt, not for the Army which replied to the advertisement, but for the craven mock-rulers who besought when it was their business to command.

In the same way he scoffs at the "silken chain" view of Imperial relations. The silken chain is a mere cobweb, which will be blown away at the first gust of real disagreement. "Imperial sentiment" can never supply the place of "organic union." The whole thing is a pretence. If the authority of the so-called Imperial Parliament—that is, the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland—were a reality, it would be the most intolerable tyranny; since it is unreal, it is a phantom. There was logic in the attitude of Bright and other Radicals who anticipated complete independence as soon as the Dominions attained maturity. There is no logic in any policy between that and a system in which true sovereignty exerted by a Central Government is felt in the most remote corner of the Empire.

And this sovereignty must not concern itself merely with affairs of defence and police. It must manage the Empire as the gardener does his garden; it must "trench and drain and plant, and provide artful shelter, and clear the choking undergrowth." It is a pessimist creed to leave things alone, and let effort lose itself in waste. "The effort, it is true, can only come from the



individual, as the sap can only come from the soil; but the direction of effort must come from elsewhere."

Given this wise direction, Mr. Oliver's proposition is indisputable. The whole point resides, of course, in the "elsewhere." Whence is the direction to come? The manager of a stud-farm knows exactly what he wants—speed, strength, or general utility—and is undeniably superior, in brain power, if in nothing else, to the animals he breeds. The gardener knows whether he wants cooking apples or strawberries, cauliflowers or green peas, in what proportions and of what flavours. But the eugenist is not clear whether he wants a poet or a hammer-thrower, and may be more stupid, more vicious, more generally undesirable, than the people he would eugenise. The State-builder, too, is only human, sometimes, indeed, falls short of the ordinary standard for men of good education: he may have as distorted an idea of a State as the makers of Sicilian Avenue—"experts," no doubt—had of a street. Mr. Oliver is never tired of pointing out with how little wisdom this country is governed. He has himself explored the Irish question, and, for all practical purposes, given it up. In one mood no man could be less illusioned. Yet in another he seems to believe that only sluggishness and want of imagination stand in the way of devising

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a constitution which would make the British Empire one organic whole. Like Mrs. Chick, he believes in the virtue of "making an effort."

The consolidating force he relies on, a little faintly perhaps, is aristocracy. He himself grants that caste is the inevitable corollary of a State ruled on the principle he advocates. Caste is, indeed, his remedy for anarchy. He insists on the loss the United States has suffered from the unconcern of its great families in government. He calmly assumes that all the virtues of the British Constitution are due to the "aristocratic" elements it has retained, and all the imperfections to the "democratic" flavouring it has grudgingly admitted. Now it is no doubt arguable that aristocracy has been in many respects highly useful, just as it is certain that its influence has been in some ways extremely pernicious. But when Mr. Oliver speaks of aristocracy as if it were more or less synonymous with the modern House of Lords, he is surely lacking in that "objectivity" on which he prides himself, and is a victim of the "bondage of phrase" which he denounces with such sure rhetoric. There was a case for an aristocracy which, apart from a quite visible and limited self-interest, had no axe to grind. It might pursue in certain directions a very selfish and unjust course; but it could be trusted, according to its lights, to seek the good

of the whole nation. It did not sell, and it could not be bought. Can the same be said of the new plutocracy, whose interests, while as wide as the world, are by no means obvious to the ordinary man? Aristocracy was above all things national: plutocracy everywhere tends to be international. Mr. Oliver has much that is true, and occasionally something that is quite impressively sagacious, to say concerning the dangers of our present loose system of mere makeshift or drift. But for the remedy he tries to look around him for something that is perhaps not there, while neglecting the boundless potentialities that really exist. For example, he often speaks of "tradition," "sense of public duty," and so forth, as if they were confined to a quite narrow class. Yet it would seem, from the records of the Law Courts and the gossip of the society columns, that *noblesse oblige* is less true than it was of a particular section of society, while most educated but quite undistinguished men, have the happiness of a large circle of acquaintance in which the standard of integrity is of the highest.

Mr. Oliver's surname at once suggests Bath, and one cannot mention Bath without thinking of Cheltenham. The rills of wisdom that flow through "Alexander Hamilton" and "Ordeal by Battle" are, surely, Cheltenham waters. His writings suggest, despite their sturdy disdain for

the mere sentimentalist, the superstitions so common in the pleasant Cotswold town, where retired conquerors on the minor scale exchange theories with statesmen who have only swayed imaginary Senates. Very ordinary people can curse a lord or a walking delegate. But it is only a very superior and cultured upper middle-class critic who can combine a distrust for the "democracy" which has never existed in England with the old-fashioned reverence for the "traditions" of the "great English families" who have mostly ceased to be great.

## MR. T. P. O'CONNOR

WHEN Mr. Thomas Power O'Connor, Member of Parliament for the Scotland Division of Liverpool, attained his seventieth birthday a courtly surprise was expressed in some quarters. It seemed to many people astonishing that so juvenile a man should have passed the allotted span. And indeed there are affinities between Mr. O'Connor and the boy who refused to grow up. But, foolishly enough, the present writer experienced a shock precisely opposite in kind. For it has always been a pet notion of his, tenaciously held despite all documentary evidence to the contrary, that "T. P." goes back to the time of Thackeray's Fleet Street, that his original name was Jack Finucane, and that he once acted as sub-editor on the paper for which Mr. Arthur Pendennis did the reviewing.

Let it be at once "conceded," as they say in the great Republic, that the ordinary authorities in no way support this view. They tell us, quite confidently, that Mr. O'Connor's father was Thomas O'Connor, and his mother Theresa Power,—hence the "T. P." which many may have thought stood for Thomas Patrick or Timothy

Paul. They tell us further that he was born at Athlone in 1848, that he was educated at the College of the Immaculate Conception in that famous city and at Queen's College, Galway, and that he entered in 1867 what Carlyle calls "the extremely miscellaneous regiment" of journalism. He became junior reporter on a Conservative Dublin paper called *Saunders' Newsletter*. The nature of Mr. O'Connor's views at this time cannot be ascertained; but it may be assumed, without offence, that the politics of the paper were less important than the meagre pay it offered. Journalism in Ireland is a more than usually hungry business; and after three years young "T. P." found intolerable the discrepancy between his salary and his manly appetite. He went to London in search of larger things just about the time Napoleon III. was coming to England to accommodate his diminished state. An Irish recruit is always sure of finding plenty of friends on the London Press. "Why *Pall Mall Gazette*?" asked Wagg. "Because," answered Captain Shandon, "the editor was born at Dublin, the sub-editor at Cork, because the proprietor lives in Paternoster Row, and the paper is published in Catherine Street, Strand." Young O'Connor was not long in finding on the *Daily Telegraph* a more substantial guarantee against famine than Dublin could give him.

The quick-witted young aspirant rapidly "made good" as a newspaper man, and was not long in getting hold also of certain political ropes by the aid of which he lowered himself deftly from the Press gallery to the floor of the House of Commons. Nobody not Irish, I take it, really understands the mysteries which go to the making of a Nationalist M.P., and it is not for me to attempt to pierce the veil. Suffice it to say that, long before he had acquired any great reputation in the Republic of Letters, "T. P." got himself elected for Galway. Once in the House, he stayed there, though in 1885 he transferred his affections from the Irish city to the Liverpool Division which has since remained faithful to him through all kinds of political weather. His great journalistic chance came in the late eighties. The London democracy wanted an "organ"; the *Star* was designed to fill the want, and who so fitted to express the yearnings of the dumb millions by the Thames as the ex-junior reporter who had pondered the great problems of humanity on the banks of the Liffey? In many ways the *Star* under Mr. O'Connor was a remarkable production. He gathered round him—or somebody did it for him—a knot of extremely brilliant men. There is scarcely a vital London newspaper to-day that does not owe the greater part of its success to the talents of *Star* men of those early days. The

extraordinary vulgarity of one side of the paper—as a matter of mere fact it never actually referred to Tennyson as “Alf”—was redeemed by the equally notable ability of its political, literary, dramatic, and musical criticism. Yet for all this it may be questioned whether Mr. O'Connor ever possessed the qualities of a great editor. Certainly the history of the *Sun*, which he founded after leaving the *Star*, suggests that the unquestioned brilliance of his first editorial experiment may have been the result rather of a happy series of accidents than of his controlling capacity.

But there was one feature that he stamped permanently not only on this particular newspaper, but on popular journalism in general. That was “Mainly About People.” The same quality which probably forbade the career of a great editor has made “T. P.” the most famous gossip of his time, and the forerunner of all who find fame and fortune in telling stories to the people in the pit about the celebrities in the boxes and the stalls. “T. P.” is too much interested in people to have much thought to spare for questions. He is of the school of Horace Walpole; “Serious business is a trifle to him, and trifles are his serious business.” Not that “T. P.” is without convictions. But from the bread-and-butter point of view he cares little “what Mr. Gladstone said in 1872”; he is more interested in how Mr. Glad-



stone looked, smiled, coughed, or hiccupped—for this is “copy.” Irish people, in fits of temper, have sometimes called him, very absurdly, “an Englishman, born at Athlone.” There would be more point in describing him as a Cockney so completely Londonised as to be now chiefly a stage Irishman. And one important side of the Cockney character is an almost personal pride in the West End. Brown and Jones may declaim in their political capacity against the rich and great, but they love to know that Mr. Solly Joel has had his shutters painted green, and that the Duchess of Upminster has had her famous rope of pearls restrung. It is concentration on that fascinating department of things which has gradually made the grosser realities of life a little dim for Mr. O’Connor, and converted the once fiery democrat of the *Star* into the sleek *flâneur* of “M. A. P.”

And here we come back to the Jack Finucane theory. “It was,” writes Thackeray, “a grand, nay, a touching sight for a philosopher, to see Jack Finucane, Esquire, with a plate of meat from the cookshop, and a glass of porter from the public-house, for his meal, recounting the feasts of the great, as if he had been present at them; and in tattered trousers and dingy shirt-sleeves, cheerfully describing and arranging the most brilliant fêtes of the world of fashion. Since

he left his own native village Jack had seldom seen any society but such as used the parlour of the taverns which he frequented, whereas from his writing you would have supposed that he dined with ambassadors, and that his common lounge was the bow-window of White's."

It is precisely this talent of suggesting slap-on-the-back familiarity with the great that is Mr. O'Connor's strong point. "We are most intimate; *je le tutoye*," is his incessant note. But clearly Jack Finucane knew all the tricks to be learned in that respect. He only suffered the fate of men in advance of their time. Are we, then, justified in assuming that, the ordinary books of reference notwithstanding, Jack Finucane really was "T. P."? There is at least material for a new Baconian controversy a century hence. The present writer does not wish to be as dogmatic as the late Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence. He does not suggest imbecility in those who may deny that Jack and "T. P." were one and the same person, and point to mere discrepancies of age and so forth; he is content to point out that "T. P." is merely Finucane well-dressed, prosperous, and experienced in cookery, with the run of the House of Commons smoke-room and the Hôtel Métropole at Brighton.

"T. P." is, with the possible exception of Mr. Harold Begbie, the most prolific of newspaper

writers; which is saying something. "The most unaccountable of all ready writers," says Carlyle, "is the common editor of a daily newspaper. Consider his leading articles; what they treat of, how passably they are done. Straw that has been thrashed a hundred times without wheat; . . . how a man, with merely human faculty, buckles himself nightly with new vigour and interest to this thrashed straw, nightly thrashes it anew, nightly gets up new thunder about it; and so goes on thrashing and thundering for a considerable series of years; this is a fact remaining still to be accounted for in human physiology. The vitality of man is great." That is just the miracle of "T. P."—how much he has done that is scarcely worth doing, and how passably he has done it. He is not, and probably never could have been, a good writer. He is too glib, too uncertain of what he wants to say, too easily satisfied as to how he says it. But he is, within limits, a capital talker in print, and only tedious when he makes one of his rather rare excursions into the serious. He possesses in a quite rare degree the journalistic instinct for things momentarily interesting, and equally the journalistic knack of assuming familiarity with things of which he is abysmally ignorant. So long as the Emperor Diocletian remains imbedded in Gibbon he is nothing to "T. P." But should Mr. Asquith

disinter him in a speech, or Lord Rosebery treat him to a "Last Phase," "T. P." is ready with a chatty two columns on the futility of human ambition and the exquisite satisfaction of growing cabbages, with perhaps a glance at the ineptitude of a former Irish Secretary who disregarded "T. P.'s" advice concerning the cabbage potentialities of County Clare. He will tell an aristocratic ghost story with great gusto if there was a marriage yesterday in the family of the haunted; otherwise the ghost clanks its chains unheeded. He revels in a book by a nobody about somebodies, or by a somebody about anything; the one book that has no interest for him is the book that depends on nothing but its merits. As with the jester in "As You Like It," the strange places of his mind are crammed with observation, "the which he vents in mangled forms." But the main miracle in the whole business is not the colossal memory for things unmemorable, nor the amazing facility of the writer, but the robustness of a digestion which can, year after year, absorb mere husk and turn it into tissue which, however mulluscoid, has some shape and life. Mr. O'Connor keeps at seventy much of the chubbiness of healthy youth; and indeed only a very healthy and a rather humourless man could have got through all his work.

Such is Mr. O'Connor regarded as a literary

curiosity. As a politician, except perhaps as a go-between, he has long ceased to have any particular significance. Possibly he may be, in a roundabout way, rather a liability than otherwise to the Nationalist party. For, though no doubt a sincere Irish patriot, he gives the English a false and rather dangerous impression. He is so very much the stage Irishman that we are apt to think him the only reality, and to doubt, in regarding him, the reality of very different Irishmen we never see—such as those mistaken but brave and cultured men who were court-martialled and shot in 1916. We might still have had to shoot them, but we might have shot them understandingly, and taken better measures to avoid future shootings, but for the comical contrast between Mr. O'Connor as Irish stalwart and "Tay Pay" as universal provider to the Cockney passion for trifles.

## SIR HENRY DALZIEL

IN those days, now so dim and distant, when the *Daily News* used to talk about the flowing tide, the great heart of British Liberalism was rejoiced by the election for Kirkcaldy Burghs of a young journalist, the chief fact concerning whom appeared to be, judging from the "Mainly About People" columns, that he spelt his name Dalziel and pronounced it like D. L.

The leading articles notwithstanding, the world went on much the same after this "brilliant and significant victory" as before. The cause of the people for which Mr. Dalziel was understood to be enthusiastic was not materially advanced by his attainment of what proved to be a freehold of the Scottish burgh. Nor is it clear that Kirkcaldy itself gained much by its fidelity to Mr. Dalziel. He conferred on it no great intellectual distinction. He was not a rich man, who could manure this light soil with gold. He had no influence of the kind which Scottish Whips have sometimes rather impudently brought to bear on the politics of small places in Northern Britain. He could hold out no hints of Government con-

tracts if things went well; in fact for years there was no Liberal Government on which pressure could be exercised. But, however obscure the reason, Kirkcaldy was faithful to Mr. Dalziel. That Mr. Dalziel was faithful to Kirkcaldy is more easily explicable. The letters "M.P." were of great value to him, vastly more than the title since bestowed on him by a grateful monarch. It is often debated whether the literary man does well or ill to enter Parliament. Everything depends on the man. If his object is to say great things, he can generally say them much better outside. If he wishes to do great things, it is quite unlikely that he will succeed; the common fate of most literary recruits is to diminish one kind of reputation without making another. But it is a different matter with the journalist who cares nothing about living in the future and much about living in the present. A seat is to him a great asset. Editors of all kinds look kindly on the writing M.P., and cashiers relax their parsimony. He is *ipso facto* an "expert" on anything from the style of a morning coat to the latest mood of the Amir. If personal journalism is his line, the fact that he sits behind the Prime Minister is held to qualify him to treat the British public to "Private Peeps in Downing Street." If he deals ponderously with public questions, the pages of the heavy reviews are open to him. If

he supplies the daily press with Lobby tittle-tattle, he can use more or less confidential information to advantage. And if his ambitions are altogether wider, and he aspires to buy and sell newspapers instead of news, he is in a position to get in touch with very rich men. People who sneer at the House of Commons as a mere talking shop ignore the fact that it is a shop for all sorts of commodities, a great shop, doing a surprising amount of business.

Sir Henry Dalziel does not belong to the old thriftless order of journalism. There is nothing of the Bohemian about him. His pale and rather full face, with the big black moustache and the bagged eyelids, suggests rather the professional director, and the staid style of his dress—he is addicted to the tall hat and the now infrequent frock-coat—belongs to that character. He does not speak a great deal, but seldom rises without attracting attention. Not that he ever says anything of startling originality. Even among politicians he is rather remarkable for the poverty of his thought and the shabbiness of his phraseology. It may almost be suspected that he deliberately adopts this penurious style, just as Mr. Rockefeller is said to wear a secondhand wig and patched trousers—it emphasises his significance. For the whole interest of Sir Henry Dalziel's speeches, like that of the barometer, is



really outside them; he has come to be, in a quite special degree, the storm indicator of the House of Commons. What would be coughed down from a less subtle personage is from him carefully heard and weighed. During the period when Mr. Asquith's fate was in the balance, a stranger to the House of Commons might well have been astonished by the strained interest in a question or speech of Sir Henry Dalziel; meaningless to him, it was full of import to those behind the scenes.

Behind the scenes is the region natural to this Londonised Scotsman. Himself a man of no great force, he is skilled in setting greater forces in operation. It has been noted that the only power really possessed by man is that of lifting things into their right place. Yet that power suffices for the most tremendous results. Our part in the firing of a fourteen-inch gun or the flight of an aeroplane is only that of cunning juxtaposition; the forces of nature do the rest. In the political world equally surprising things come about through the manipulation of relatively puny agents. Sir Henry Dalziel is what men of science call a catalyser—itself insignificant, but the cause of much. How far he represents any principle in politics is uncertain; though he is understood to have a preference for “advanced” things: they are certainly easier to talk

about and make better headlines. His attachment to Mr. Lloyd George is very genuine; so also was his attachment to Mr. Asquith; all Sir Henry's loyalties have the surest foundation. He is above all the "practical politician": as free as most men of idealistic impedimenta. Such men often achieve a very considerable success, but it is seldom, even in the worldliest sense, the highest kind. Some degree of enthusiasm for the imponderables seems to be necessary for anything approaching greatness even in material things. The very American sausage-maker who thinks only of dividends will never quite lead the sausage industry; he, too, must be something of the poet, seeking to express himself in festoons of sausages linking all the continents together. It is, perhaps, the lack of all mysticism in Sir Henry Dalziel which imposes a certain limit to his success as a newspaper organiser on modern lines. Though, through the *Daily Chronicle* deal, Sir Henry Dalziel has stepped into the first rank in Fleet Street, he is no second Northcliffe. His work is what the Italian connoisseurs of painting call *pasticcio*; every collector is familiar with the picture in which some rather second-rate artist has caught an expression from Michael Angelo, an effect of light from Caravaggio, a bit of colouring from Bellini, and a pose from Leonardo. All is there except the one vivifying touch of genius.

The most remarkable thing about the newspapers which Sir Henry Dalziel has acquired is that they at once ceased to be remarkable when he assumed control. There was a time when many men would have disinherited their sons for reading *Reynolds's*; it now rouses angry passions no more than the *Bazaar and Mart* or the *Poultry Record*. Lord Northcliffe is an example of a real but limited genius working through the medium of printed matter. Sir Henry Dalziel mainly illustrates the weakness of the modern multiple newspaper control—a weakness which in the long run must produce a very enfeebled press or provoke a wholesale revolution in journalistic methods.

When Captain Shandon was reading the prospectus of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Publisher Bungay, the proprietor, went off to sleep, and only woke to say it was "all right." Thackeray makes a point of Mr. Bungay's dullness; but after all it was perhaps the most sensible thing Mr. Bungay could do. He knew Captain Shandon, and he knew himself. Captain Shandon could always be trusted with a policy and never with a five-pound note. Mr. Bungay had not the smallest conception of how many political beans went to the making of five; but he knew exactly how many "ems" went to a column of minion type, and how many advertisements to a fine middle-class fortune. Captain Shandon heard him snore;

his clerks and canvassers never did. And that was really the secret of the respect in which Mr. Bungay was held by his banker, and the *Pall Mall Gazette* by its readers.

The comparative dignity and sanity of the Victorian press have been the theme of much admiring comment; but it is less generally recognised that these qualities rested largely on the consciousness the old kind of proprietor had of his limitations. He took no stock in ideas. Ideas were the editor's business, and to do the editor justice he was generally honest and able. Advertisements and circulation were the proprietor's business, but, to do him justice, also, he had the decent pride of a tradesman that still compels a West End butcher to limit his profit rather than lower the character of his shop. He was proud of dealing in a first-class article, proud and not the least jealous of his editor's reputation as a scholar, wit, or man of the world. Of the typical newspaper magnate of to-day the precise opposite is true. He makes policy; his editors express it. There are no "great editors" to-day; no Delanes of *The Times* or Mudfords of the *Standard*. But there are also no Bungays, merely saying "All right" to their Captain Shandons. Instead we have men of vast wealth, going freely into the enlarged "society" of the time, and knowing most people who "count." The editor is no

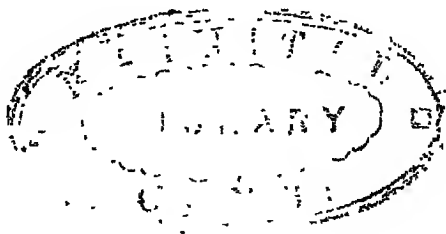
longer the chief of a band of Free Companions, hired to fight for a particular cause, but allowed a large choice in the manner of it; he is rather a generously paid phonograph for the conveyance of instructions. The due expression of views, rather than the views themselves, is his department. In some ways the change of system works well. There is less slavishness to party. On the wider aspects of policy there is often a quite reasonably fair and independent judgment. The modern newspaper magnate is too rich to be bought, and generally too shrewd to be hoodwinked on matters of which he is in a position to judge. He may be over-apprehensive of the mythical man in the street, and sometimes degenerates into a mere popularity-hunter; but it would be, generally speaking, a mistake to think of him as wholly lacking in a sense of responsibility or wholly absorbed in pushing his circulation. In brief, he means well, is generally a patriot so far as he knows, has some sense of public duty, likes to be fair when his prejudices are not violently aroused, and on the whole fulfils his function as well as can reasonably be expected of a very busy man, with many interests, business and social. But it is obviously impossible for any one person to grasp all the immensely complex problems of these times, and the tendency of a rich and much courted man is to collect his

opinions as he does his old masters, on the advice of friends and experts who are often interested and very seldom dependable. Moreover, it is hardly possible for a person much in political and general society to preserve the impartiality necessary for due performance of the duty of a public critic. It is, of course, easy enough to deal the kind of blow that the clown gives the policeman in the harlequinade. One can denounce in Fleet Street the profligate finance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and yet exchange pleasant commonplaces with him the same evening in Grosvenor Square. That is all in the game, and nobody in the game resents it. Much social discomfort, however, must be the lot of the man who deals faithfully with public men whose friends he is always meeting. The incompatibility between social ubiquity and full independence was recognised by many old editors, who lived lives of seclusion, while making use of a perfect intelligence department. It is true that in some marvellous way more than one modern Colossus of the newspaper world does continue to withstand the thousand and one influences brought to bear, from the smile of beauty to the frown of power. But there have been, and are, others less stoical; and the opinions expressed by some newspapers, undoubtedly depend not at all on what any one person, wise or foolish, thinks, but

partly on whom the proprietor dines with and partly on what is considered good business. Naturally in due course the more intelligent public assesses pretty accurately the value of such comment. It has a knack of guessing what it cannot know, and soon detects the "leader" that does not lead. In turn the newspaper becomes aware that its opinions count for little; but it still aims at influence, and there arises a temptation to omit, emphasise, or colour news according to effect aimed at. This manipulation has been in some cases carried so far that the reader of a single daily newspaper would have a most fantastic notion of what was happening at home or abroad.

But the main danger to the Press traditions of this country after all lies not so much in the eccentricities or weaknesses of the man who has built up a great property, as in the purchase and sale of newspapers as if they were strings of butter-shops or eating-houses. The great newspaper-owner who is also a master of his craft must have a personality; people get to know his peculiarities and make due allowance for them. It is otherwise with the people who buy rather than breed. The honest Chauvinist print of to-day may be the organ of cosmopolitan finance to-morrow, or get into the hands of a foreign group next week. The reader never knows what

"interest" is behind it. There is a danger, undoubtedly, in the ease with which speculators can buy newspaper plants, and (with occasional exceptions) newspaper staffs. But the danger may be easily exaggerated. The case of the defunct *Standard* shows that it is easier to acquire a great newspaper than to maintain it as an effective influence. The public is quick to judge for itself whether there has been "no change of policy," still quicker to detect the absence of personality. There is no personality in a Trust unless it is, in essence, also a man. And in journalism, as in other crafts, technical skill will never quite compensate for the absence of conviction. Influence, in the long run, depends on intellectual honesty, and intellectual honesty is precisely what the Trust-monger cannot buy, and, generally speaking, does not think worth buying.





## MR. HILAIRE BELLOC

“THE little more, and how much it is!” Mr. Hilaire Belloc is an example of how much too much the little more may sometimes be. Surely the most bountiful star of the firmament must have twinkled over his nativity. Part French, part English, with a touch also of Irish blood, he possesses a quite unfair proportion of the gifts and graces of all three nations. His French clearness of brain is modified by something no Frenchman ever had that marks him as authentically of the land of Shakespeare. He is very French when he writes about British politics; he is very English when he writes about his much-loved Sussex. He is French in his faculty of treating intricate things so that they do not confuse, and dull things so that they do not bore. Here he is at constant war with our tradition that to be deep one must be rather illiterate and a little stupid. Nobody would ever dream of calling Mr. Belloc level-headed, and he would want to call out anybody who did. In his abundant wit, his savage irony, his tendency to argumentative brutality, his black-and-white logical definiteness—in all that

polcmical part of him he is the true son of his father, the French barrister. But no Frenchman could write, few Frenchmen could understand, his nonsense rhymes, and in his best lyrics there is the very smell of England's "foggy south, puffing with wind and rain."

Of that side of Mr. Belloc, too little seen in his middle age, it is not my business to speak. His best books are, indeed, dainties to be tasted rather than talked about. My only concern here is with Mr. Belloc the political critic and the founder of a school of thought for which it is hard to find a short name. Its aim is very largely destructive; and here we have perhaps the influence of Mr. Belloc's Irish blood. He is not only "agin" a particular Government, but "agin" the governing conditions of all Governments at all likely to be formed just now. Of course, it is no necessary reproach to criticism that it is destructive. As Mr. Belloc himself quite reasonably says, destructive criticism is sometimes the only sound kind. If free love or State-aided cannibalism reach the region of "practical politics," there is no obligation on an opponent to suggest reforms in our marriage laws and our cookery books; it is enough for him to oppose.

There need, therefore, be little sympathy with the people who meet denunciations of alleged evils by the question, "What do you propose to

do yourself?" If Mr. Belloc thinks some modern Chancellors of the Exchequer are capable of malversation, by all means let him say so (taking his own risk of an appearance at the Old Bailey), without being required to give the address of a model Minister of Finance. Possibly destructive criticism is the most useful and patriotic course an independent observer can at present pursue, and these are days when essential conservatism must often wear a revolutionary aspect. The characteristic vice of modern politicians is acting first and thinking (if at all) afterwards; and the only things they incline to leave alone are the things which really do cry for removal. Never was there more enthusiasm for pulling down houses and less for emptying dust-bins.

A truer criticism of Mr. Belloc is, not that he makes no positive contribution to the common stock (in fact, he has made many), but that he habitually indulges in an over-emphasis unjust to himself as well as the men and institutions he attacks. The pleasant land of France (which can make itself very unpleasant in the matter of controversy) is no doubt chiefly responsible once more. From premises to syllogism, Mr. Belloc proceeds as directly as one of those poplar-lined military roads he loves, trampling without ruth on all that lies between. "Given certain conditions, certain results will happen. Here are the

conditions: it is I, *moi qui parle*, who tell you, and that's an end on't; the results have already happened, and will be visible on Tuesday week at latest." You may be, probably will be, silenced, if not perfectly convinced, for it needs a strong head and a stout heart to withstand the full Belloc armament: the skilful artillery preparation of high-explosive denunciation, the splendid infantry work of argument and illustration, and the brilliant cavalry sabre-strokes of satire and invective. But if you persist in intimating a doubt, Mr. Belloc either pities you as a fool or denounces you as something worse. You are classed with the Puritans who would veto beer, the brewers who would water it, the cosmopolitan Jews who are engaged in a conspiracy against nationality, or the Servile-State advocates who are plotting against freedom. You may even be placed in the lowest depth of all, with Alfred, Viscount Northcliffe, whom Mr. Belloc often calls a "fellow."

We know how the use of that word temporarily disturbed the good understanding between Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman, and the spirit of revolt which Mr. Belloc is apt to engender does no doubt detract from his influence as a teacher. No reasonable man will complain that Mr. Belloc sometimes dismisses an opponent by calling him a fool or a rascal. If easy, it is sometimes most

effective; and undeniably there are great numbers of fools and rascals. But there are other kinds, too, and the charge of folly or rascality tends to become less rather than more convincing when spread over a large body of defendants. When the dock contains a majority it ceases to be a place of peculiar infamy.

It is this "little more," giving earnestness the aspect of fanaticism and strong individuality the savour of crankiness, that diminishes the authority to which Mr. Belloc's great parts really entitle him. Thus he argues, very reasonably, that the Jew occupies a special position in the modern State, that he is always a problem, and sometimes a danger. The point has been put epigrammatically by Mr. Chesterton. A nation, he says, consists of families, but there are some Jewish families which consist of several nations. Jewish idealism, like Jewish finance, cannot have it both ways. It cannot expect to exert a specific influence without meeting a specific criticism. It cannot claim a special position for the Jew as a Jew, without raising the question of the Jew as a citizen. But Mr. Belloc seems to go much farther. He takes rather the line of the orthodox seventeenth-century Englishman to the Roman Catholic. A sincere Roman Catholic must be a bad subject, an insincere Roman Catholic must be a bad man; *ergo*, place all Roman Catholics

under the ban. Mr. Belloc and his followers appear to argue that a Jew whose sympathies extend to his co-religionists in other countries must be a bad, or at least, an undependable citizen on that special ground; while a Jew so base as to care nothing for Jewry will be a bad citizen because he is a mean and bad sort of man. Hence all Jews are suspect; and, as in the case of game, the higher the Jew the nearer he is to corruption. To many people the indictment would be more convincing if there were something less of it.

It is the same with Mr. Belloc's attacks on Parliamentary corruption and the party system, secret funds, sale of honours, traffic in places and policies, and so forth. The House of Commons may not be the "vilest and dirtiest society" imaginable, but it does include a great number of self-seekers, a fair number of generally undesirable people, and not a few downright rascals. The immense strength of the machine, the progressive enslavement of the private member, the general lowering of tone, and the growing tendency of party managers to cultivate very rich men, undeniably provide conditions highly dangerous to the purity of public life. It may not be, as Mr. Belloc alleges, that the Party System is a One-Party System, that the ceaseless strife of Parliament, Press, and platform is merely a wearisome

form of comedy, that the two Front Benches, ostensibly opposed, are really in collusion, and that they are commonly the obedient agents of the moneyed classes who provide the funds of both. But obviously there must be a good deal of sham about the "organised quarrel" when we find Sir Edward Carson on the friendliest terms with many of the members of the Government he defied. It may not be evidence of insincerity that men politically opposed will meet at the same dinner-table, or drive from the same tee. But we may be pretty sure that, if they do, their differences are not very deep.

Mr. Belloc has been criticised because he will have nothing to do with this amenity, but with passionate energy "damns," from every point of view, the man he has no mind to politically. Here, again, he is very French, and also very reasonable. He is in earnest about principles, while British politicians are apt to be lukewarm about everything but interests. That tolerance on which we plume ourselves is really no great matter for pride. It only means that we bring to a game the spirit in which a game should be played. If the game by any chance became earnest another spirit would soon appear. There was much earnestness, and little tolerance, in Castlereagh's time.

It is rather, indeed, by the diffusion than the ferocious intensity of his attack that Mr. Belloc tends to defeat his own purpose. Attempts to paint a whole town red usually leave the town much its original colour, and incidentally disaster generally follows to the artist. Much the same may be said of attempts to paint a multitude black. A few enthusiasts, indeed, will cry with ecstasy that everybody is very black indeed; but the great majority, seeing only much grey and a little white, will rather infer colour-blindness in the critic, and may even be led to overlook the presence of indubitable negroes.

The same exaggeration which produces fanatics in small numbers breeds infidels by the million; and a little more moderation would have given Mr. Belloc a larger and perhaps not less sincere following. It would certainly have ensured a more serious consideration of his extremely acute and suggestive analysis of the tendency to what he calls the Servile-State. As it is, there are a number of devoted disciples who see another step to servitude in every administrative and legislative act, and a great mass of sceptics who believe the thing, as well as the name, to be a pure invention of Mr. Belloc's.

The sceptics are probably more wrong than the faithful; the danger which Mr. Belloc has made



clearer (if it is an exaggeration to speak of him as a sort of sociological Columbus) might well receive more attention. But it is, in some ways, Mr. Belloc's own fault that opinion is thus unsatisfactorily divided. It is the penalty of the "little more."

## THE DUKE OF SOMERSET

DURING the Budget campaign, when "the Dukes" were being violently assailed, Lord Rosebery declared that they were, on the whole, a "poor but honest class."

If we accept this view, Algernon St. Maur, fifteenth Duke of Somerset (bearing the title first conferred on that "Protector" Somerset who from the beginning failed to protect anything but his own interests, and ultimately failed even in that), must be deemed a highly representative Duke. It is certain that he is honest; his poverty is a constant theme of the writers of "gossip" in the popular papers. Whenever the Duke and his charming Duchess do anything remarkable—and even more often when they do things quite ordinary—the public is reminded of their comparative destitution. "I saw the Duke of Somerset getting out of a taxi in Grosvenor Square," writes "Peeping Tom" in "Club Chatter." "It was curious to note with what skill he opened the cab-door for himself, the driver obdurately declining, as drivers do in these levelling times, to get down from his seat. But *duris urgens in*

*rebus egestas*, as Jowett used to say to me in my Balliol days; and the Duke has known what it is to rough it. Everybody knows, etc." "I saw the Duke's Herculean figure in the Park," says Lady Godiva in "Social Jottings." "He looked so good-humoured and 'nice.' But then he is one of the very nicest of our Dukes. Poverty has not embittered him. Lady Teazle tells me when he succeeded to the title he had hardly a picture; and it was really pathetic to see him taking home 'The Soul's Awakening' and 'The Harvest Moon' in photogravure to give something of a home appearance to Grosvenor Square. Of course, things are better now, and just before the war Victorian R.A.'s were within the reach of the poorest. But the Duke never faltered during all the long struggle, and has absolutely no envy for the really well-to-do."

From such gossip the uninstructed in these matters might infer a sort of Ravenswood living in a ruinous house with some old Caleb Balderstone as sole attendant. But, of course, things are not quite as the plutocrats of journalism (who describe ten complicated courses as "To-day's Simple Luncheon") picture them. Poverty is a relative thing; and judged by ordinary work-a-day standards the Duke of Somerset is quite tolerably off. He has, it is true, only twenty-five thousand acres, and of his three country places

Maiden Bradley is the only one that really counts; Burton Hall, Loughborough, and Berry Pomeroy, near Totnes, simply look well on the landscape and in the reference books. But Grosvenor Square cannot be called a cheap part of London; and "big-game hunting in all parts of the world" is not to be had for the price of a little rabbit-shooting. The Duke has hunted big game everywhere, except in politics; "seals" have never been in his line. The Duchess has pursued big game with him in Canada, and written delightfully of her experiences there; her "Impressions of a Tenderfoot" are good reading for those who like that sort of thing. But then the Duchess is in most ways decidedly talented. She can paint, turn out a neat copy of patriotic verses, organise "days," manage Primrose Leagues, and write piquant letters to *The Times*. She has the reputation of a charming hostess, and of a veritable Lady Bountiful among the non-ducal poor of her country.

If the poverty of the St. Maurs is relative their honesty is absolute. They make no pretence of being what they are not, or of not being what they are. They are very perfect specimens of one sort of English Tory. The aspect of Toryism which the Duke represents is not, indeed, its most gracious side. With the broader creative policy of Toryism he has nothing in common; he

is simply the "Everlasting Nay" incarnate. He would agree with Swift that "law in a free country is, or ought to be, the determination of the majority of those who have property in land." He seems to believe, literally, that the aim of all good government is to maintain the Duke of Somerset, with others who more or less imperfectly resemble him, in the position to which an all-wise Providence has called him. All government which fails to proceed on that premise is bad government. If, accepting the premise, it allows itself to be overborne by circumstances, then it is cowardly government. From the library of Maiden Bradley the Duke fulminates equally against the predatory Radical, the subversive Labour man, and the timid Conservative. Mr. Lloyd George he views with a sleepless suspicion. It was, indeed, too much to expect the chief of sinners against property to be sincerely converted into its defender and guardian; yet the Duke did seem to hope for some short space. But latterly he has been bitterly disappointed in the Prime Minister; suspects him of sympathy with Bolshevism; deplures his poltroonery in dealing with strikers; is very much afraid he will be after domestic hen-roosts now the foreign wolf's teeth have been duly drawn. "Spoliation" is what the Duke fears from any poor-spirited and venal Minister who is at all likely to wield the "spigot of taxation"

in these days. And against "spoliation" he proposes to fight. To that end he is President of something called the Liberty and Property Defence League, on behalf of which he writes long letters to the papers, full of sounding phrases: "threatened encroachment," "victims of confiscatory legislation," and the like. The Duke, a very large man, with a tendency to fluster and bluster, cannot be described as a skilled controversialist; he makes no attempt to present his case in the most attractive light, and his simple "Damn their impudence" attitude towards "Labour" must at times give infinite concern to more wary politicians who are probably not unsympathetic to him on general grounds. Hence he ploughs a rather lonely furrow. From the frequent appeals for subscriptions it may be inferred that the Liberty and Property Defence League is not a large or prosperous organisation. The "property-owning and trading classes," taken generally, evidently do not want to enlist under the Duke's banner and fight his battle as well as their own. Possibly they are wise. The Duke is a Duke who is nothing but a Duke, and there is a decided slump in Dukes as Dukes.

Society at the moment may be compared to a ship in distress. When it is fine weather the first-class passengers are people of great importance, and the fo'castle hands are people of

very little. Three solid meals a day, with beef-tea at eleven, tea at four, and biscuits at ten, are the portion of the cabin; the nourishment of the fo'castle is a more obscure subject. But when the storm comes the meals of the first-class passenger sink to altogether secondary importance, and even his trunks have to go overboard if it comes to a question of saving the ship. In such circumstances the less the first-class passenger says the better; he must not be "louder than the weather" or he will provoke from some rude bo'sun (who, after all, is doing his work) the retort, "Give thanks that you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap."

There are plenty of first-class passengers (Dukes among them) working; still more bearing themselves stoically, as the times demand, since they can do no more. But to the minority, whom the Duke of Somerset seems to represent, who can wonder if the working mariner cries, somewhat discourteously, "A plague upon this howling; you mar our labours; you do assist the storm" ?

## SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

ALWAYS an interesting man, Sir Thomas Beecham is just now at the most interesting stage of his career. The coin that is to decide his larger future is still spinning; all depends on how it comes down. Heads he wins; tails he does not exactly lose; it is only a question whether his name shall be written in water or in material lasting as "the gilded monuments of princes"—the reference, of course, is not to the Albert Memorial.

For in the narrower sense Sir Thomas has undoubtedly arrived; there is no further question as to his talents as a conductor. Even after his "campaign of Italy," twelve years ago, some disposition existed to regard him as a dilettante. There is always that feeling when an Englishman of means takes to any of the arts; the notion derives from a Puritanism even more convinced of the frivolity than of the wickedness of fiddling, playing, and painting; our stern ancestors saw a certain common sense in a rich man going to the devil through cards, wine, or woman, but thought it merely stupid that anybody should imperil his soul for the satisfaction of dominating cat-gut or



camel-hair. But Sir Thomas has long outlived this stage; whatever else he may or may not be, he is now acknowledged as a very serious artist, and a very considerable and individual one. It remains to be seen whether he will realise his much higher ambition of being, so to speak, the Monk of an English musical restoration. "Great wits are sure to madness near allied," but even thinner partitions separate the enthusiast from the crank; and it is often only the accident of the time that gives to a man of one idea the stature and lineaments of the hero. But for a thousand accidents Cobden would have died a local crank, and Rousseau would have survived only to furnish easy "copy" to Mr. E. V. Lucas. In the same way Sir Thomas Beecham, born twenty years earlier, might well have harboured only an unproductive bee in his bonnet. But he has been lucky in coming to manhood at a time most favourable to the reformer—and by no means unfavourable to the quack. With the new century there came a general thaw. The ice of the old Victorian compromise and self-satisfaction broke finally up, and strong currents began to flow. In every department, from economics to frocks, there arose a temper at once sceptical and eager, believing in nothing but anxious to attempt all things. To these crusaders without a faith use and wont became the one thing intolerable;

you could go backwards to guilds and Gothic with Mr. Chesterton, or forward to socialism and reinforced concrete with Mr. Wells; but you must not stand still. The world of music felt the impulse like other worlds, and under its influence rapidly ran through the usual course of revolutions—Gironde, Mountain, Terror, Directory. The last stage is still to come. Will it be through Sir Thomas Beecham or another?

*It can still only be said that he is qualified by a quite unusual combination of qualities to give rule to chaos. His enthusiasm is very real. He comes from the North, where the love of music is a deeper passion than anywhere else in England. The North was the last part of England to be civilised; it was the first to yield to modern industrialism; and the very haste of this latter process has only strengthened the moral rampart that divides it from the South. The old religion is stronger; the old manners cling to a larger class; the "parish walk" survives; children dance round the maypole; captains of industry, while sending their sons to Oxford, eat goose at high tea. Here also the old English love of music remains less distorted than anywhere. It is still a popular thing; rough men break naturally into song, and many of them spend their evenings in a kind of music which farther South would be the hall-mark of "culture."* Sir Thomas Beecham

was musical from his cradle. His father was musical before him. He was, of course, the great "pillionaire," who began by selling his wares in St. Helens market-place, and ended by leaving one of the largest of second-class fortunes. Lancashire people still remember the excellent little song-books in which Beecham's Pills were advertised. This was, it may be guessed, more than the device of a smart speculator; it was Joseph Beecham's second passion seeking satisfaction. For he had a genuine love of song, and a genuine wish to extend the love of it; as a lad he spent his shillings on seats for the opera, and when he arrived at great wealth nothing gave him more pleasure than bestowing musical largesse, ranging from organs for churches and chapels to generous opera guarantees.

From this North-Country worthy Sir Thomas Beecham has inherited a certain business shrewdness in odd contrast with his Bohemianism and his disinterested fervour for his art. He has the paternal talent for advertising. He is not only determined to make opera, especially opera in English, worth many guineas a box and a fair number of shillings a seat, but he is careful that the public shall not forget him or it. He may not have deliberately adopted certain mannerisms, as Disraeli did his glaring waistcoats and his elf-locks: to emphasise his personality when every

gun had to count. But it is certain that, as he has passed from success to success, he has gained in simplicity as well as in power. His gestures become constantly more restrained. His beard, once an unadulterated joy to the caricaturist, grows less remarkable. The caricaturist will not give it up unless forced, but it is now nothing very much out of the common as a beard, though Sir Thomas remains much out of the common as a man. For there is in him a wealth of artistic temperament wholly independent of tricks and fashions. He combines an enormous energy with a plentiful lack of system. He has a sublime disregard for detail. He is the despair of people who make appointments; he has a trick of being in Paris when he is expected in Glasgow, and of turning up in London, Monte-Cristo fashion, on the last stroke of the last hour. There is no greater optimist; whatever the state of preparation he is sure of everything being "all right on the night," and somehow he has all the British lack of "muddling through" with brilliant success. Perhaps it is not quite luck; he has a talent for improvisation closely akin to genius, and difficulty acts on him like wine. There have been generals who could never show their highest qualities without getting into a tangle at the start, and the greatest of Beecham triumphs have often been snatched from the very jaws of disaster.

But it is mainly as a man with a mission that Sir Thomas Beecham stands out from all living musicians. His mission is not so easily defined. It is really nothing so narrow as "Opera in English"; that belongs to the advertising side of the artist. All opera is really performed in a special opera language, and nobody cares in the least what tongue the singer would employ to ask for the mustard. Nor has Sir Thomas any stupid notion of being "All-British" in an affair that knows no frontiers. He is rather concerned in bringing the English back to their old station as a singing and song-loving people, appreciative of all good things, and capable of good things of their own. After all the man who appreciates excellent port will not tolerate bad beer; and when there is a demand for good things of any kind the supply is pretty certain to come. Sir Thomas Beecham's true aim is to make music in England a real thing by making it a democratic thing. He wants to make it something with a root, self-supporting, and self-propagating. For the secret of all vital art, like the secret of the flower, lies below. The ultra-aristocratic view of the arts, which reached its culmination in Wilde's generalisation that everything popular must be bad, is based on a confusion of ideas. It postulates the gardener as more important than the soil. Assuredly you are likely to get finer roses

in a Duke's pleasure than in a neglected back-garden. But all the Duke's staff can only direct and modify the forces of nature; and if the Duke can command no suitable soil he must needs go without roses altogether, or buy them from the nearest market. It is much the same with art. Art may be a cut flower, or a parasitic growth, or a healthy, open-air, sturdy thing, according as the nation generally feels about it. In painting there was the cut-flower period, when we imported Flemings, Italians, and Frenchmen, from Holbein to Verrio, to supply the needs of a very limited circle. Then succeeded what may be called the hothouse period, which still exists; there is a luxuriant and even rank growth in response to liberal manuring of gold. The third stage has not yet been reached in any general sense, though more than one stately forest tree has grown up here and there by sheer luck. The truth is that the greatest art matures only among peoples with a very widespread love of art. A narrow circle of connoisseurship, though it may be invaluable in giving direction, cannot supply the necessary inspiration. Popes, kings, and nobles are often excellent gardeners, but the soil is the common man, and where the populace is coarse in taste the aristocracy will almost certainly be either unrefined, or foreign in its refinement. When any art is healthy it will appeal most

strongly to the finest, but it will also have some appeal to the coarsest, and art is always on the way to decay when it sets up as a sort of mystery to be understood only by people expensively educated. If every British householder delighted in water-colours, however crude his taste, there would certainly grow up schools of British water-colour very vital and admirable, though probably very unlike anything now approved by connoisseurs. The glory of the Dutch school was simply an example of supply following demand. In the same way, if the English masses were once seriously interested in music, we should soon have, first rude life, and then tempered strength, in musical composition. That is why Sir Thomas Beecham is supremely right in seeking to make opera popular and to make opera pay; there can be no genuine life in an institution that depends on the patronage of the wealthy. And it is probably fortunate that he unites with the fire of the artist something of the talent of the showman. The first necessity for anything that wants to succeed nowadays is to get itself talked about, and Sir Thomas Beecham gives no newspaper reader an excuse for knowing nothing about "Opera in English."

## MR. RUDYARD KIPLING

"For, as a surfeit of the sweetest things  
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings;  
Or as the heresies that men do leave  
Are hated most of those they did deceive;  
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,  
Of all be hated, but the most of me."—

*Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

MR. KIPLING came to England about the time of the first great influenza epidemic, and his popularity for long followed much the same course as the disease. At first it swept all before it; this devastation was followed by a period of comparative immunity; then the plague returned in somewhat diminished virulence; and since there have been alternations of ebb and flow, each attack being feebler than the last. The cleanest bill of health, so far as Kiplingism was concerned, synchronised with the Great War. Mr. Kipling is not, perhaps, altogether a spent force. But it seems safe to say that he will never again be more than a minor one.

It is curious at this time to recall the prodigious boom of the late eighties and early nineties. About the time that the first Jubilee procession



was trailing through the streets of London, disfigured with a leprosy of five-guinea seats, a short-sighted, rather untidy young man, lightly enough regarded by his editor, sat in inked and crumpled whites in the office of the Allahabad *Pioneer*, scribbling in his spare time squibs, sketches, and stories of Indian life. Two or three years later publishers and editors were fighting for his lightest word. Critics were ranking him with the immortals. A cloud of imitators, commentators, and parodists, in Gibbonian phrase, "obscured the face of literature." Newspaper writers competed with each other as to which should use oftenest the adjective "far-flung."

A very few kept their heads. The fastidious Oscar Wilde described the newcomer as a genius who "dropped his aspirates," and "emitted splendid flashes of vulgarity." Mr. Chesterton admired his talent, but reprobated his spirit, and spoke (perhaps unjustly) of the famed "Recessional" as the outpouring of a "solemn cad." But these voices of disapproval or of limited eulogy were lost in the general roar of unmeasured applause. Mr. Kipling conquered every circle. Literary men dwelt on the perfection of his method, and rather rashly assumed a permanent value for much that was little more than clever instantaneous photography. Some Churchmen praised his religious poems in language which might seem

a little extravagant for Isaiah. The suburban young man murmured "Fuzzy Wuzzy" or "Gentleman Rankers" while he shaved, and vaguely felt himself a man of action. The young lady of Streatham revelled in the dawn coming up like thunder out of China 'crost the bay, and experienced a thrill of splendid wickedness when she came to Suez and the exploded Ten Commandments. There never was such a boom before. There has been none such since.

And here we arrive at the old question—Is the Age made by the Man, or the Man by the Age? "The great man," says Carlyle, "was always as lightning out of Heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they, too, would flame." I shall not pretend to determine whether Mr. Kipling was lightning from Heaven, or the more obscure kind of fire which is generated by a fermenting haystack. Suffice it to say that as an author he was most fortunate in his nativity. Whatever we may think of his message, he arrived in the very nick of time to deliver it.

His strident trumpet of challenge rang out as opportunely as the defiance of the unknown knight in "Ivanhoe." It broke the silence that succeeds a finished conflict; it smote ears expectant of little but boredom. The whole audience had settled down, after the great Victorian show, to munch sandwiches while the scene was being

shifted for the next act. Nobody expected a new sensation for an unconscionable time to come, and here was something altogether novel and moving. Something like a Byzantine lifelessness had fallen on the English world at this moment. There probably never was a duller time than the middle eighties, the time when women disfigured their bodies with bustles and flounces, and men their minds with an affected cynicism. It was a sort of spiritual winter solstice. Everything seemed to have stopped, as if never to go again. Victoria appeared immortal in England; William I. in Germany. On the Continent reigned the iron frost of the Bismarckian terror. France was sunk in pessimism, and England in a kind of optimism almost worse; she had persuaded herself that all was as right with the world as could reasonably be expected. Churchmen, smarting from a thousand dialectical shafts from the hosts of Rationalism, went slumming to save the pain of thought. Huxley and the Darwinians, apparently victorious in the great evolution controversy, subsided into mere dogmatism. The "advanced," sneering at Heaven and the Trinity, twaddled about Mahatmas and the "astral plane." Nobody (outside, of course, the ranks of active partisans) believed in Radicalism, but then nobody believed in Toryism either. There was a sort of Third Republic in letters, the reign of safe, dull men; in art of any

kind sincerity was considered the mark of the beast. A sense of finality oppressed society. Even in material things the world seemed to have gone as far as it was likely to go. The steam-engine, the telephone, the ocean cable had long ceased to be marvels; the motor-car, the X ray, the phonograph, the kinema, the wireless telegraph, and the aeroplane were still unborn.

To this bored circle Mr. Kipling was as welcome as the Prince in an Arabian tale whose incantation calls to life an enchanted palace. He brought with him a rush of fresh air (air that was fresh in one sense, at least), a new sensation, a new romance, almost a new religion. The frantic delight with which he was received is eloquent of the destitution of the audience. Yet it would be a mistake to under-rate the genius of the entertainer. On the face of things he chose a very unpromising field. Englishmen as a whole had never been greatly interested in India. They had the exact opposite of interest in Englishmen living in India. Read any novel written during a century before Kipling, and you are pretty sure to find that the standard bore is somebody like Joss Sedley. It was a performance of the very highest genius to take the narrow, conventional society of the plains and hills and invest it with the atmosphere at once of romance and (within certain narrow limits) of palpitating realism.

Vitality was the special quality of the younger Kipling. He could infuse life into anything. The life was often spectral and even devilish; there is, indeed, little really human, even in Mr. Kipling's schoolboys. But he gives some sort of tongue, and some sort of soul, even to machinery; it may almost be said that his machines are more human than his men and women; and he can make even a smell live. Into the dull Victorian life he brought the smell of the bazaar, of the jungle, of the hill-top station, of the baked village of the plains, of the steamy Burma port, "looking lazy to the sea." And with all this devil's broth of barbarian geography he mixed the ingredients of a new witches' caldron, making the gruel thick and slab with lumps of life as he saw it. He presented, so to speak, a curried version of the world, the flesh, and the devil, spiced with the sins of "strong" men and unpleasant women, going through their common little intrigues and talking their banal little jargon against a background of outlandish splendour. The appeal to the home-keeping Englishman was irresistible. The good and the bad in him were equally flattered. "Don't be ashamed of yourself as a little Cockney cad," said Mr. Kipling, in effect, "Jones, who is worshipped as a god round about Quetta, was much the same as you. You also, if it so chanced to you, would be as he. For you are of

the breed within the law; and, being within the law, it really doesn't matter very much what lawless things you do in the smaller way." It was old Calvinism in a new and piquant disguise.

One of Mr. Kipling's earlier critics accused him of "the affectation of barbarity." As we now know, the barbarity was in no way affected; it was innate. Mr. Kipling is personally a kindly man, but he seems to have in himself something not himself that makes for savagery. When he rhapsodises over an engine one feels that he revels rather in its terror than its service, that he thinks of it as a chained monster, and half wishes the chains would break, and allow it to show fully the demon in it. When he deals with a woman he rejoices equally in what she suffers and what she inflicts; he has no sympathy with what she can give or enjoy. As to his males, he can draw a ruthless man, or a sensual man, or a slangy man, or a man who talks in rather nasal tones of duty and sacrifice; he has still to show his understanding of an average Christian. It is not by accident that his fancy so often plays round prehistoric man. His moderns are also not more than neolithic.

Significant, again, is his affection for the Old Testament and his odd sympathy with less gracious varieties of Christianity. Throughout the rather confused stuff of his philosophy runs the idea of

a Chosen Race; and that, the most pestilent heresy that can seize a people, really threatened to possess us during the temporary loss of humour induced possibly by too many Jubilee processions. Great Britain caught Mr. Kipling rather badly, and was scarcely more than convalescent when something happened to restore her balance. That something was a manifestation of the same disease in Germany. The attack, we may honestly believe, was much worse than anything we suffered. Old nations will survive an outbreak of smallpox such as destroys many a savage tribe. But we really had the malady in pretty severe form. Mr. Kipling dominated the South African War; his part as prophet and inspirer during the greatest of all wars has been, on the whole, unequal to his position in letters. In his anti-German utterances, also, one seems to note a certain embarrassment mingling with much communicatory fluency. But, in fact, what *could* he consistently say? How could he condemn the mean thefts, the slave-raids and brutalities in France and Belgium, when such a thing as this was ready to rise in evidence against him?

“ Now remember when you’re ’acking round a gilded Burmah  
god,

That ’is eyes is very often precious stones;  
An’ if you treat a nigger to a dose of cleanin’-rod  
’E’s like to show you everything ’e owns.

When 'e won't prodooce no more, pour some water on the  
floor,

Where you 'ear it answer 'ollow to the boot.

(Cornet: Toot! Toot!)

When the ground begins to sink, shove your baynick down  
the chink,

An' you're sure to touch the . . .

(Chorus) Loo! Loo! Lulu! Loot! Loot! Loot!

Ow the loot!"

Truly those who saw fun in this sort of thing, and allowed it without protest to be put in the mouth of a British soldier, should beware of spiritual pride to-day. We have passed through our fever. But when we think of that great Kipling boom, our proper attitude to the Prussian is "There, but for the exceeding grace of God, goes that John Bull who once dipped deep into his breeches pocket to free the slave."



## VISCOUNT CHAPLIN

IN the House of Commons before July, 1914, two objects impressed the discriminating stranger more vividly even than the Speaker's mace or the gods of the Treasury Bench. One was the spreading sombrero under which Mr. John Ward sat, like the village blacksmith in repose, and owed not any man. The other was the broad-brimmed silk hat of Mr. Henry Chaplin, apparently made specially for him, at any rate unobtainable through the ordinary channels of commerce. There is no special reason why a large expanse of soft felt should symbolise rebellion, or a stiff cylinder of shiny material should stand for prescription. It was, in fact, the former style which was mostly affected by the old Tory, while the first top-hats sat on the heads of furious revolutionaries.

Still, somehow these two hats seemed to stand for attack and defence; the one represented the insurgent slum; the other the grey manor-house, with its trim lawns, riches of antique elm and beech, old-oak panelling, Kneller and Gainsborough ancestors, well-stored cellars, over-fed

horses, and under-fed labourers. Both belonged to men entirely genuine in their way, and not incapable, despite their hostility, of a certain sympathy with one another. If the aggressive "cow-puncher" covered a genuine man of the people, the curling silk adorned a not less true representative of the English classes. At the trump of war John Ward threw away the hat for a khaki cap, which was to be for him the casque of a very perfect knight. But if Henry Chaplin had been thirty years younger, and who knows how many stones lighter, he, too, would have sought the vasty fields of France as readily. His breed have always been a thought too ready to live on England. But they have no hesitation in dying for her should occasion arise.

The war has swept away the two hats, like much headgear of a still more notable kind. The one will return; the other has gone for ever. It is a solemn thought that the floor of the House of Commons will no more creak beneath the tread of Henry Chaplin; that he will no more "get on his legs" there, or "venture to assert, and even to asseverate, that the right honourable gentleman would have been acting in better judgment and in a better spirit, and would in fact have been better advised if he had consented, and agreed, and in a manner of speaking concurred, in a suggestion put forward in a spirit of conciliation, and frankness,

and (if he might say so) of helpfulness with the sole purpose of making this measure more acceptable to the people, not one class or section or group or clique or anything with a round turn to it, but, Mr. Speaker, the people throughout the length and breadth of the land." There must be an end to all things, and to Mr. Chaplin as well as Mr. Chaplin's sentences. But it must have been a dull soul which did not feel, as one of the minor tragedies of war-time, the elevation to the Peerage of this ornament of the Commons. Viscount Chaplin is not so pure a joy as was Mr. Henry Chaplin, M.P. Anybody can be a Viscount, given a certain degree of wealth and no previous convictions. But as much time goes to the breeding of the perfect squire as to the smoothness of the perfect lawn, and what squire so perfect as the rejected of Sleaford and the accepted of Wimbledon? Nor was this the only element of pathos in the transaction. For the conferment of the honour was in essence a decisive gesture of farewell; it was the good-night of the tired nurse, who says, "Now, my dear, you have had a nice long day; go to bed like a good boy, and I've got such a nice sugar-plum for you." As in so many cases, Viscount Chaplin's coronet was intended as a night-cap; but those who adjusted it probably did not see that it was also the culminating irony of a career singularly ironical.

For Viscount Chaplin is rather like the boy who, after looking forward to Christmas for months, spends the day of feasting in bed on a diet of milk and lime-water. His party had been "out" for nine years; and now his party was half in, with another fraction to follow. But Mr. Chaplin's appealing monocle caught no responsive glance from the party managers. Time was when he had only to "drive through Arlington Street without calling" to get some official crumbs from the rich Cecilian table. But a new Pharaoh had arisen, who knew not Joseph, or mayhap knew him too well. And the unkindest cut of all was that between the new Pharaoh and the dreamer of dreams there existed a doctrinal link absent in the case of his predecessor. Lord Salisbury employed the heretic; Mr. Bonar Law found the true believer superfluous. Bitterness is alien from Viscount Chaplin's nature; even his dislodgment in 1906 could not dim the kindly twinkle of his humorous eye or narrow the smile which makes his manly features so attractive. But he would be hardly human if he did not feel like those old Royalists who, wearing an eye-patch for Edgehill and an armless sleeve for Naseby, found Charles II.'s council chamber full of dexterous hypocrites who had served the usurper.

For the greater part of his career Mr. Chaplin played the rôle of an amiable Protectionist Penda.

He was the one confessed pagan in a nominally Christianised land. A certain awe attached to him during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century as the almost solitary devotee of "Fair Trade." This man, felt the young Conservative, had seen things strange and fearful. He had held familiar converse with the high-priest of pre-Manchester heathenism. The dread secrets of the now deserted groves had no mysteries for him; his nostrils had been assailed by the grateful smoke of human sacrifice; and for him at least the old gods were not dead, but only in exile like Heine's. It must have been pure luxury to Mr. Chaplin to enjoy this semi-fearful admiration of men half inclined to regret the old worship, but not bold enough to hint at restoring it. Even more grateful would be the suspicions of the orthodox; nothing is more pleasant than an unmerited reputation as a dangerous fellow. Mr. Chaplin could not become Chancellor of the Duchy without alarmed deductions of a plot against Free Trade. Economic heresy was scented in every question he put to a witness on a Royal Commission on Horse-breeding. His Bimetallic views caused a shiver in the City of London, and when he became the first President of the Board of Agriculture it was felt that the hungry forties were well on their way back. In short, Mr. Chaplin was regarded as a dangerous man, a sort

of economic Guy Fawkes, ready for any desperate emprise against the foundations of all prosperity. He was, of course, perfectly harmless. For, besides that his general disposition was by no means disposed to martyrdom, his very antagonism to Free Trade was really a bulwark to that system. For when Mr. Chaplin "went so far as to venture to" assert a doctrine, or "was for his own part not ashamed to confess that he was not altogether satisfied," the tendency of the unthinking was to smile or yawn, according to their mood. It seemed impossible that so ponderous a pursuer of truth should ever get to the bottom of her well—still more inconceivable that he should return with a full bucket.

Then of a sudden all was changed, and the lonely heretic found himself one of a mob of true believers. It might have been thought that, in such circumstances, while Birmingham had claims to be considered the Mecca of the Tariff Reformer, Sleaford should at least be numbered among the holy places. But Mr. Chaplin had the mortification of finding himself more obsolete in the new scheme of things than he had been in the old. It was as if Thor had been revived to see the twentieth-century resurgence of Teutonic paganism, only to find he had as little in common with Krupps as with the Crusaders. For there was really a whole world of difference between Mr.

Chaplin and the neo-Protectionists. He talked through a very English hat; they mainly through rather un-English throats and noses. His ideal was to make England more squirishly English; their aim was to make England rather like America, with a dash of Prussia on the "social reform" side. Lord George Bentinck was the last standard-bearer of the old cause. Mr. Andrew Bonar Law, Scotch-Canadian business man, without an acre of English land or a savour of English sentiment, very faithfully represented the methods and ideals of the new school.

It says much for the stoutness of Viscount Chaplin's heart, and something for his healthy insensitiveness, that he continued to linger superfluous on the stage where he was denied a rôle he must have thought appropriate to his merits. Any man less English would have retired long ago, to write the epic of Hermit's Derby and memories of the days when the House of Commons was really a first-class club. But Mr. Chaplin was in nothing more English than in his passion for a sixth act and an encore; he could not see that the real curtain of his drama came in 1906, when Sleaford forswore its thirty years' allegiance. We need not painfully inquire whether he could not get on without the House of Commons, or whether he perchance imagined that England and the House of Commons could not get on without

him. Probably it was a little of both; it is certain that this entirely amiable man is sometimes the victim of strong illusion. Undeniably he has always believed in his own statesmanship; equally sure is it that he was sincere when he declared that old-age pensions would sap the sturdy independence of the British working classes. Others could see the incongruity of such sentiments in the mouth of one who has eaten much public wages for a quite measurable amount of public service. But Viscount Chaplin was never less conscious of being a humbug than when he (who had got through much private money and was enjoying an ungrudged pension) sermonised on the insouciance likely to be induced in a young hedger and ditcher by the prospect of five shillings a week at seventy years of age.

"Very odd and curious," said Mr. Harold Skimpole to the person who had "taken" him, "the mental process in you men of business." The squire mind, with its fine enthusiasm for thrift in the cottage, and its kindly eagerness to repair out of public funds the ravages of extravagance in the hall, is perhaps equally worthy of study.



## SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

As a literary man, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle may be likened to a plain squire who sits at the table of princes. He is not of their rank, but he is of their circle and atmosphere. It seems absurd to class a humble craftsman with Shakespeare, Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, but theirs is truly his company. Unlike them, he has made no great literature. But he is like them in having created a character everybody knows, a character to be quoted with the same confidence that one mentions Falstaff or Pecksniff or Major Pendennis.

True, Sir Arthur has only one such child to his credit, while others have begotten sons and daughters on the patriarchal scale. But it is a great feat. How great one simple test will show. Where else are we to look for a character as distinct, as well known, and as universally recognisable as Sherlock Holmes? Of all the extremely intelligent men who have produced fiction during the last thirty years—and the average of writing was never so high—only two, so far as I can recall, pass the test of quotation in almost any company. One is Robert Louis Stevenson; the other is the

inventor of Sherlock Holmes. Examine the files of a popular newspaper for a week, and you are pretty sure to find one reference to Jekyll and Hyde and two or three to the Conan Doyle hero. But, while few people who talk about Jekyll and Hyde have ever read the story, and still fewer understand its real moral, the man who does not know everything concerning Sherlock Holmes, the cut of his face, the shabbiness of his dressing-gown, his indoor pistol practice, the tobacco that he smoked, the cocaine that he injected, the plots that he laid and unravelled, the kings that he patronised—that man is indeed a rarity. Say that somebody reminds you of Sir Willoughby Patterne, and the chances are you will get either a blank look or the smile of embarrassed hypocrisy. Mention even Tono-Bungay, and it is an accident if you are understood. But a newspaper read by two million indifferently educated people can be quite sure of comprehension when it prints the familiar headline, "Sherlock Holmes in Real Life."

It is, surely, a considerable satire on the modern school of fiction, that priding itself above all on its touch with reality, it has not succeeded in making a character real enough for a policeman to swear to. But the explanation is simple. Analysis is the aim of the novelist, and analysis, while yielding a multitude of facts, obscures and

even destroys the truth. There is a quite considerable difference, for example, between an Irish poet and a Jewish banker. But it would take a clever man to distinguish one from the other after a professor of anatomy had quite done with them. He might, indeed, have found a multitude of facts unknown to "Who's Who" or the "Directory of Directors." He might even have discovered the true physical source of versification in the one and of money-making in the other. But he could not justly point to the results of his activity with the remark: "How lifelike is this poet!" or "Here you have the breathing embodiment of Lombard Street!" We distinguish things by their shape and colour. Analysis shows that colour is an illusion, and can only proceed by making shape shapeless.

Sherlock Holmes succeeds, not by his subtlety, but by his simplicity, and even more by the simplicity of the famous Dr. Watson. If there were the smallest ground for suspecting the sincerity of "my dear Watson," the whole thing would topple to the ground. It often hovers on the very verge of anti-climax. For Holmes is, after all, no giant. Poe and several Frenchmen have done better in this kind, and so far as Holmes himself is concerned Sir Arthur Conan Doyle owes, perhaps, as much to them as to the Edinburgh professor whose fancy for identifying

the trades of patients by their small peculiarities gave him one set of ideas most skilfully used. Sir Arthur's true triumph is the humble Watson. Not great himself, he is the cause of greatness in another. Faith breeds faith. Worship is catching. "My conviction gains infinitely," says the sage, "the moment another soul will believe in it." Seeing Watson constantly on his knees, we all fall on ours, by mere force of suggestion.

A good many of the old painters were fond of putting themselves somewhere in their pictures. They are generally to be recognised by a peculiar stiffness: the artist painted himself by a looking-glass. One cannot avoid the conviction that some such process obtained in the Sherlock Holmes business, and that Dr. Watson is really the counterfeit presentment of his creator. At any rate, it is certain that Dr. Watson is a very English Englishman, and that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, though born and educated in Edinburgh, and of Irish blood, is another. There is, too, a great deal of incidental Watsonism in him. It can be seen in his ever-fresh interest in facts, relevant and otherwise. Possibly it is also visible in his deductions from facts. Watson noticed things, but had a trick of laying emphasis in the wrong place, and getting up all kinds of blind alleys in his pursuit of non-existent clues. Watson's creator, since he abandoned the gracious rôle of

entertainer, seems not wholly free from similar tendencies.

It is the fashion for novelists, as soon as they can afford it, to become preachers; the professional preachers retaliating in kind to the best of their ability. Whether this Hamlet-Laertes exchange of weapons really helps either literature or society need not be discussed. But the strength of the tradition could not be better illustrated than in the case of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. One would think him the last to be beguiled out of his true vocation. A fine craftsman in his own line, he is, perhaps, worse fitted than most men of equal intelligence for the task of the historian or the social critic. It is not easy to describe shortly the disability from which he suffers, but one might, perhaps, best express it by calling him a latitudinarian bigot. He is at once very broad and very prejudiced, very illiberally liberal, very dogmatically hostile to dogma.

Take, for example, the business of divorce. Sir Arthur is for making divorce cheap and easy—how cheap and how easy I hesitate to say, for fear of misrepresentation. He may be right, or he may be wrong, on the main question. But can he possibly be right in dismissing as mere antiquated prejudice the objections of millions of earnest, intelligent, disinterested, and upright men and women? Then there is his enthusiasm

for spiritualism. Here, again, Sir Arthur is quite entitled to his opinion, and has a right to state it. But how can he blame the Wesleyans of Nottingham (as he did with great severity on one occasion) for not allowing him to lecture in their hall? No doubt there are, in the immortal words of the Grand Inquisitor, "Wesleyan Methodists of the most persecuting and bigoted description." But was this particular act bigoted? Is it bigoted for a Mohammedan to object to his mosque being used for an exposure of the imposture of Islam?

Is it not rather bigoted to say, as Sir Conan Doyle does, that spiritualism gives the afflicted "a satisfaction which no creed-bound religion could supply"? How possibly can Sir Arthur know? He cannot speak with authority concerning the spiritual experiences of hundreds of millions of the quick and of the great host of the dead. It is quite open to him, as a free man, to believe that the dogmas of Christianity "matter little," and have added "needlessly to the contentions of the world." But why, in that case, be at pains to reconcile hatred of our enemies with Christianity? Why be so distressed over the ex-Kaiser making "the whole conception of religion grotesque," when you yourself deprecate "all the haggling claims and the mythical doctrines which have grown up round the name of Christ"?

Why complain that the Germans in their warfare "brought the world of Christ back to the days of Odin" ?

It is our good Dr. Watson again, wavering between the curing of patients and the tracking of criminals. We know his quality as a detective; we can only infer how the patients got on. The same English desire to have it all ways is apparent in Dr. Watson's maker. He wants to have the best of all possible and impossible worlds, to be at ease both in Zion and Valhalla, as well as in a scientific lecture room. It is all very human and natural. The majority of us are made that way, and to a story-teller it is no disadvantage to feel sympathy with very different and inconsistent things. The teacher, however, must be a little "dogmatic." He must be quite sure that two and two make four, and maintain that they never can make sixteen, even at the risk of "adding to the contentions" of the schoolroom.

But why be a teacher, anyway, when you can afford not to, and have no compelling vocation that way? It is a dull business for one who has had the world at his feet as a creator.

## MR. ROBERT SMILLIE

Of all the leaders of Labour Mr. Robert Smillie, President of the Miners' Federation, is the most interesting. He has also been described as the least understood—partly, no doubt, because he says little and says it very plainly. Other Labour leaders are comprehensible, because they are copiously cloudy. But this Scottish miner, with his taciturnity and consistency, is mysterious and sinister. He has been known to do things; it is felt, tremulously, that he might begin to do things on a very large scale. When Mr. Ramsay Macdonald spoke of revolution people yawned; they took no more notice of it than of the republicanism of a young Duke; the assured position of Mr. Macdonald in the middle class seemed so incompatible with bloodthirstiness. But of Mr. Robert Smillie all things are considered possible. He may develop into an English Lenin. He may become Prime Minister in a Labour Government. He may set up a steam guillotine in Piccadilly Circus, or even stop fox-hunting. He may—but the possibilities of Mr. Smillie are quite disquietingly indefinite.

That, at least, was a common view of Mr.



Smillie before he undertook the cross-examination of Lord Durham and the Duke of Northumberland before the Coal Commission. Since then there has been, possibly, a slight revulsion in Mr. Smillie's favour. For in that contest Mr. Smillie came off decidedly second-best; he even appeared not a little ridiculous; and it is a common mistake to think of a man who is ridiculous as a man who is harmless. It was, however, only the weaker side of the miners' Napoleon that was engaged in this affair. Like many Scots, he unites a temperamental coldness with an intellectual emotionalism, so that he chases will-o'-the-wisps with the patience and method of the deer-stalker. His theories are wild, but his practice is essentially businesslike. In dealing with first principles he does not altogether lose the controversial skill which, no less than his amazing grip of facts, astonishes those who have seen him handle concrete questions of work, wages, and labour conditions. But it is rather the skill of those masters of mad logic who bewilder us in "Through the Looking Glass." One feels that he would get on very well as consort of the Red Queen.

It is on the practical side that Mr. Smillie is really formidable. As a leader of men, he seeks his fellow in the trade union world. Nothing, indeed, could be in sharper contrast than his

failure as a talker and his success as an organiser. He has been beaten in seven or eight Parliamentary elections; even the miners of his own Mid-Lanark have rejected him. Part of his want of success has, of course, been due to his refusal to compromise with the "capitalism" that calls itself Radical. But there are other reasons. He is not a good candidate from any point of view; his autocratic temper stands in his way; he has no way with him; he loses his temper and sometimes his head on the platform; his grim face seldom lights with a smile; his speech, though clear and strong, fails to charm. The secret of his influence must be sought in other qualities. He is not "popular," even with the miners. But he has their obedience because they know he is fit to command it. For he is not only complete master of all the details of trade union organisation and of a very complicated trade, but strong, capable, and in his way wholly honest. He understands negotiation; he knows the necessity of keeping to his word, once it is passed; above all, he is disinterested. To money apparently he is entirely indifferent; if he has an axe to grind it is not an axe of the common kind. There are some who credit him with great ambitions, but they are not vulgar ambitions. For his own part he lets no hint fall of such things; Scotland does not give itself away.

Harsh conditions acting on excellent natural abilities have produced this complex personality. Mr. Smillie's case was much that of his friend Keir Hardie. He had the very minimum of schooling. The moment the primary school had finished pumping into him the regulation educational "mixture as before" he became a rivetter's boy at Govan. Disliking that trade, he drifted into mining, and for many years worked underground. His home was, and still is, at Larkhall, a dismal town in the scarred and blasted mining area of Mid-Lanark, where everything conspires to make life hideous and depressing. The naturally rather gloomy nature of Robert Smillie took on in such surroundings a deeper tinge of pessimism. Forty, even twenty, years before he would probably have sought relief in the chapel or the public-house. But the changes in manners and the decline in theological temperature have not left the working classes unaffected. Gospel hot and whisky cold are still the means chosen by some to counteract the numbness that comes of monotonous toil and all-enveloping ugliness. But there has also arisen a new type which cares for neither of these things, which tends to asceticism in practice and hedonism in theory, and, while expecting nothing in the next world, claims much in this. The aristocracy of Labour is now, generally speaking, as pagan as most aristocracies;

but it has not lost its capacity for fanaticism. Its interest in a heavenly kingdom has only been transferred to the social republic; and in place of fuddling on beer it intoxicates itself with statistics. Mr. Smillie is a fanatic of this type, and not the less dangerous because in him fanaticism is a cold passion. He is ready to cavil on the ninth part of a farthing in matters of wages, and to do battle for better housing, baths, and the like. But his ultimate aim has nothing in common with that of the ordinary trade union leader. He wants nothing less than a reconstruction of society; his methods would not be Lenin's, but, like Lenin, he desires the complete dethronement of "capital" and "privilege." He represents Scottish logic as against English compromise, and is a reminder that in many ways Scotland is nearer to the Continent than to her Southern neighbour.

For at bottom the Socialism of Mr. Smillie is a very different thing from the variety current this side of Tweed. There would be nothing fatuous or ineffective about it. It would work harshly, tyrannically, unjustly; but it would work. The Right Honourable Robert Smillie who might have been (had this country possessed any tolerable system of discovering and training for its higher purposes all the talent born in it) would have doubtless shown great talents for administration;

and the Citizen Robert Smillie who may possibly be would make the wheels of his iron world revolve in earnest. It is too late, no doubt, for society to secure the lost ally; and if it is to make Citizen Smillie impossible it must do more than rail at him. It should study with care certain words of his. "I have been one of seven persons," he said on one occasion, "who have had to wash in a small kitchen, one little tub serving all of us as our only bath, and a change of water taking place only when the water would no longer serve its purpose of removing dirt." Now, this bestial state of affairs cannot be wholly set to the charge of "capitalism"; there are poorer and less organised workers who do not tolerate such conditions. If the Japanese coolie can get his daily hot bath, the British miner, with his high wages, need not lack, somehow or other, the minimum of decency. But one thing is certain. It may not be specially dangerous to allow stupid men to live in stupid dirt; it may be even dangerous to deprive them of their dirt by force, but to allow the clever and ambitious to grow up to manhood in such conditions is madness. Every vivid nature that grows up warped and embittered by Robert Smillie's experiences is a social danger, and more dangerous, perhaps, if he becomes an honest man than he would be if he joined the ranks of scoundrelism. It is easy to understand

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a lack of passion for social justice. It is less easy to understand the carelessness of the comfortable classes concerning social security. One would think that the mere instinct of self-preservation would lead to the construction of some educational net which would make sure that youths of brains and character are not permanently ranged against the existing order by the bitter contrast between their potentialities of mind and soul and the degradation of their physical life.

## MR. J. R. CLYNES AND SOME OTHERS

It is not easy to arrive at a quite just view of the working man in office. In the arts and sciences we have, or should have, an absolute standard. A mathematical proposition is either true or untrue; nobody is stupid enough to say that it is unworthy of a peer, or creditable for a brick-layer. When the popular publisher announces the discovery of a real navvy poet, sensible men make no allowance for the possible difficulties of composing triplets in corduroys, or thinking out an epic while balancing a wheelbarrow on a six-inch plank. They do not care in the least whether the versifier was a navvy, but only whether he is a poet. In the case of a painter we may read with a certain languid interest that he was caressed by kings, or that he failed to please the beer-seller for whom he painted a sign. But these matters are quite extraneous; we do not say that he was a good colourist, considering that he was born in the workhouse, or that a public-schoolboy should have been stronger in perspective.

In politics the case is different. One cannot

always judge by results, since results are often not visible at all, and still more frequently the ostensible result is of very small importance compared with the real one. For example, the mere presence of Mr. Barnes in a War Cabinet would have been invaluable, even if Mr. Barnes, like the late Duke of Devonshire, had contributed to the discussions little more articulate than a series of powerful yawns. The politician is valued for what he is supposed to represent, as well as for what he is. Mr. J. R. Clynes was more valuable at the Food Control as a trade union nominee than he would have been as the owner of half an English county. On the other hand, it is obvious that social position or its equivalent has a good deal more to do with routine success in politics than with success in an ordinary career. Mr. Wellbore-Wellbore will always have a pull, if only because he can pay for his seat, is safe against electoral accidents, and stands for one constant factor, the rights of property. A dull man never out of touch with the House of Commons has an advantage over a sharp man often excluded from Parliament and only very exceptionally in office. It is not, therefore, fair to compare the Labour member, who of all politicians works under the gravest disadvantages, but who also has certain peculiar claims in a time of national crisis, with the ordinary practitioner



at Westminster. We must judge of him with his limitations and his special position constantly in view.

When all allowances are made, it can hardly be said that Labour Ministers have more than justified expectations. They have done neither very badly nor conspicuously well. Their chief positive quality has been their extreme addiction to red tape. Of all officials they have been the most official, the least liable to depart from routine, and the most ready to postpone decisions. Mr. Clynes is perhaps the only exception. He did show great ability, and much strength of character. How much of Lord Rhondda's success may be justly attributed to the able work of his lieutenant, how much, on the other hand, Mr. Clynes owed as principal to the foundations laid by his predecessor, is not for the present writer to determine. But one thing may be said with fair certainty of Mr. Clynes. He has, in a greater degree than any of his Labour colleagues, displayed the essential qualities of statesmanship—courage, balance, vision, and a capacity for non-committal co-operation with people who may be the opponents of to-morrow. He, at least, gives the impression of having worked on equal terms with his chance colleagues. Other Labour Ministers accepted with peculiar meekness a special status which was rather brutally exempli-

fied in the Henderson "doormat" incident. Even Mr. Barnes, who is naturally a dignified as well as a wholly honest man, seems to have regarded his seat in the War Cabinet as emphatically a back seat, and to have been content to look on himself rather as a Labour delegate than a British Minister. Mr. John Hodge, common-sense and practical, with the class of mind which in other circumstances might have made him head of a great store, was yet more a victim of "atmosphere"; it is quite possible that he regards Mr. Law as in some mysterious way of higher social status than himself. There were a great many good people who were afraid that Labour Ministers would not know how to "behave." As a matter of fact, they have "behaved" beautifully, but just a little like the stewards of a village club waiting on a prosperous sausage-manufacturer turned squire.

No doubt this meekness had not a little to do with the disquiet of the Labour party which culminated in the decision to "call out" Labour leaders from the last Government. Labour is nervously concerned for its dignity, and eternally troubled with the fear that its representatives may be seduced by association with the "bourgeois." On this subject it is possible to have sympathy both with Labour and with its unfortunate representatives. We have here in

modern guise the very old problem of the tribune of the people. The people can only express themselves through individuals in whom they repose confidence, and whom they invest with their power. But as soon as they have made such an individual important, he becomes worth buying, and attempts, generally successful in the long run, are made to buy him. In the words of De Lolme, the people "cannot show preference to a man, but they thereby attack his virtue; they cannot raise him, without immediately losing him and weakening their own cause; nay, they inspire him with views directly opposite to their own, and send him to join and increase the number of their enemies." The demagogue who goes over to the patricians is a figure of every age, and is by no means unknown to-day.

Labour has, no doubt, good reasons to be on its guard against this danger. Yet an attitude of excessive suspicion may actually provoke the evils it seeks to avoid. On the whole the representatives of the British working classes have so far shown a very high standard of political integrity. The brighter spirits among them could do better in a good many lines, and there is no labour more exacting, and no servitude more repulsive, than that of men whose masters are counted by the million. Yet the "ratting" of a Labour member is a very rare incident, and

though the Labour vote is very often stupid, it is seldom dishonest. Obviously, however, conditions are liable to change if Labour becomes commonly in a position to insist on a large representation in the Cabinet; and one of the great problems for the party will be how to breed a race of statesmen at once able, incorruptible, and loyal to their class.

The best solution would probably be to lighten the stress on the word class, and be content with much the same measure of control which is asserted in the case of other parties. Let us suppose, for example, that Labour produces a really great man. There is no manner of reason why it should not do so. The wonder is rather that thus far mediocrity has been so general a characteristic of Labour leaders. Such a man of genius, in present circumstances, would be inevitably lost to Labour within a few years. He would bear, so long as he was forced, and not a moment longer, the sneers of Conferences concerning his salary, his dinner-table companions, and his felonious addiction to a good cigar and an occasional bottle of champagne. He would stand, only so long as was strictly necessary for his purpose, inquisition as to his wife's hats and the education of his children. He might consent to be "called out" once or twice by his Union; meanwhile he would be busy with plans to be

“called in” by some more permanent employer. It is easy to denounce such a man as a selfish adventurer. In exactly the same sense all the great statesmen that ever lived were intriguers and self-seekers. For the greater the man the more open he is to such temptation. Love of money is a less imperious motive than the first-class workman’s hunger for his true work and desire for the best tools to do it with; and that instinct is confined to no social class. Labour may be fairly sure of its representatives so long as they are merely representative, and of no importance in their individual capacity. There is no object in seducing a man who becomes of no account the moment he is bought. But it is not easy to see how Labour is to effect much politically so long as it produces merely third-rate intellects, and, under its present constitution, it stands to lose any first-class minds it breeds. Ambitious and supremely clever men simply will not be treated as mere hinds.

Labour may retort that these matters are its sole concern. But the nation has a right to demand that, if Labour seeks to rule, it shall at least provide itself with a sufficient equipment of talent and technical mastery. At present it cannot be truly said that the average intellectual standing of its spokesmen is high. Such ability as it possesses runs unduly to talk. It is true,

of course, that there are many Labour members whose natural parts compare quite favourably with those of the usual rich Radical and the ordinary run of county, city, and suburban Conservatives. But one looks in vain for any commanding figure, and the mediocrity who has never exercised great authority cannot compare with the mediocrity who has grown old in the atmosphere of public business. It is of the highest importance that Labour should accumulate experience and throw up talent. No sensible man "fears" Labour in the sense of wishing to exclude it from its due share in the government of this country. The nation has need of all the ability and honesty it can command, and it is to the last degree undesirable that a very inclusive electorate should go with a very exclusive cabinet. What really is to be feared is the full development of the voting strength of Labour without any proportionate advance in the statesmanship of its leaders. And it is difficult to discern much hope of increased stature while the rank and file of Labour continues to show jealousy of any superiority within its own body. The trouble seems to be, not at all passion for democratic equality, but the class pettiness which pervades all English society and makes the clear-starcher more contemptuous of the ordinary laundress than a Duke is of a tradesman. It is

said that the British soldier will never follow an officer of his own class as he will an indubitable "gentleman"; and the loyalty of the trade unionist to his leader seems to be tempered by two feelings: scorn that he is not something better, and suspicion that he is trying to become something better. One trouble of a Labour Ministry at present would be that it could not command the confidence of Labour. For Labour, with all its talk of "democracy," retains the distinguishing mark of a servile tradition: it is not strong enough to subject itself to strong leadership. Only those will voluntarily accept a master, and serve him with cheerful and constant loyalty, who are very sure of their ultimate capacity to get rid of him if he proves unsatisfactory.

## VISCOUNT CAVE

As Mr. George Cave, he was the party politician not very far from his best. He is a gentleman, for what that may be worth—and it is worth something, if not quite so much as was once thought. He is a lawyer of real learning and great professional achievement. He is a most favourable specimen of orthodox public school and University culture. And throughout his Parliamentary career he showed himself, as politicians go, quite exceptionally honest.

Entering the House of Commons rather late in life, he rapidly acquired a reputation as one of the few effective speakers in the quieter vein on the Unionist benches. Between 1906 and 1914 the history of the Unionist party may be summarised as an alternation of "nights-out" and sick headaches. The Member for Dublin University led the revels; it was Mr. Cave's office to administer the soda-water next day, and smooth over matters with the magistrate. He was put up whenever it suited the purpose of leaders to pose as over-tried patriots who had perhaps been led into some excess. Mr. Cave's entire respecta-



bility was almost as great an asset as his talents. The latter were, perhaps, rather over-rated; but that was only natural: nothing is more graceful or touching than the reverence of a young prodigal for the solicitor who gets him off with a nominal fine or vanquishes a hungry horde of creditors. Mr. Solomon Pell was not more the oracle of the Pickwickian coachmen than Mr. Cave of those very Die Hards from whom he was most widely separated in temperament and perhaps in conviction. But, indeed, nearly all men conspired to speak well of him. He enjoyed vast respect at the Chancery Bar; his constituency of Kingston gave him no kind of trouble; the whole county of Surrey was his club; and while his words carried weight in the House of Commons, he had no enemy in that assembly. Perhaps no man at Westminster had better reason to be satisfied with the present and at ease regarding the future.

When the war came, Mr. Cave, unlike many others, dismissed party politics from his mind. He took up war work of an extremely prosaic but very useful kind. He placed himself at the disposal of the Foreign Office, and without fee or reward applied himself to reduce the immense volume of legal work arising out of contraband. At that time he could probably have served the State in no better way. But it was not a sensa-

tional way, and could have no sensational reward. Mr. Cave was neither a public joke nor a public danger, and so, when the law officers were replaced on the formation of the first Coalition Government, he was forgotten or deliberately overlooked. Later in the year, however, Sir Edward Carson left the Government, and thus it happened that Mr. Cave became, in the late autumn of 1915, Sir George and Solicitor-General. In that capacity he speedily showed that the expectations formed in Opposition were not unfounded. He took charge of measures as to the manner born, and showed that a style of speaking perhaps a trifle too unimpassioned for a party leader was an eminently efficient instrument for the purposes of a Minister.

The *coup d'état* of December, 1916, brought Sir George Cave his greater opportunity. He became Home Secretary in the reconstructed Ministry. In that capacity it fell to him to steer through Parliament that enormously complex and controversial measure, the Representation of the People Act; and the success with which he accomplished the task seemed to have established his Parliamentary reputation on an impregnable basis. But these expectations were not justified. The one triumph was succeeded by a number of comparative failures. It was soon apparent that Sir George Cave was one

of those pleasant, intelligent men who fill to admiration quiet posts in quiet times, but have neither the talents nor the temperament necessary to a "skilful pilot in extremity." Sir George Cave was by no means "pleased with the danger when the waves ran high" over Aliens Bills and such contentious subjects. Not that he was a coward. But a life in which respectable abilities, respectably exercised, had earned a more than respectable reward, had unfitted him for the ruder side of the game of politics. "I bruised my shins the other day," said Master Slender, "with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; and by my troth I cannot bear the smell of hot meat since." Something of this qualm seems to have overtaken Sir George Cave when, after all men have spoken well of him, a few "very ill-favoured rough things" presumed to criticise. He was worried by back bench revilings. He was pained by newspaper comments. Every day the Court of Appeal, with its curtained dignity, called him with a more alluring murmur of invitation. And one morning the world—or that part of it which troubles about such matters—read that Sir George Cave had accepted legal preferment and a viscounty. He had earned them, no doubt. But there was a certain irony in the memory that the new peer had once been acclaimed as

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“The Man”—the Master Mind that only awaited full authority to “win the war.” In justice to Lord Cave, who numbers modesty among his many virtues, it should be added that he was probably as much amazed as anybody by this discovery.

## MR. LEO MAXSE

IF you are much in places where men of the Conservative sort foregather to eat, drink, and make speeches, you cannot fail sooner or later to mark a man, dark and lean, whose earnest and almost fierce expression contrasts oddly with the tone of the gathering.

Everything round him is British and post-prandial. The Empire, of course, is tottering to its fall, but the company bears up surprisingly. It lies back and enjoys its cigars, while the chief speaker denounces presumptuous Radicalism, officially represented probably by the chief speaker's cousins, nephews, and brothers-in-law. He points out how the air is quivering with revolution; how the floodgates are opened, and bottomless anarchy threatens; how the Church is toppling to destruction, and the glory of Burton-on-Trent may soon be one with Nineveh and Tyre. A bad business, surely. But meanwhile we are left a healthy interest in good Burgundy, and the savour of a first-rate Corona is not ungrateful. "Black, please, and a little brandy. . . . Hear, hear ! Good point, that."

The dark man lets the waiter fill what glasses he likes; all that is nothing to him. He seems as little in tune with the feasting as the spectral bridegroom of the fair Imogen:

“His air was terrific; he uttered no sound;  
He spoke not, he moved not, he looked not around;  
But earnestly gazed on the bride.”

With such intensity does Mr. Leo Maxse fix his dark eyes on the eminent Conservative who is venturing to declare the faith that is in him. Mr. Maxse has no faith in the eminent Conservative's faith. He is on the watch for heresy, and if he finds it will discourse thereon to the extent of twenty-five pages in the next month's *National Review*. If? Be very sure he will find it. Where heresy is concerned Mr. Maxse has the occult powers of the late Judge Jeffreys. “I can smell a Presbyterian a mile off,” declared that stanch Churchman. With the same mysterious certainty Mr. Maxse can detect heterodoxy wherever it exists, and perhaps even where it does not exist. To him is revealed that which is hidden. His nose is as sensitive as the small dog's that finds truffles; for everything fungoid and underground his instinct is sure. He can tell you exactly how it was that the Labour party was induced to vote, against all considerations of honour and propriety, for the Second Reading of the Bill to Prevent Anything Being

Done, and what price was paid for the Irish vote in the Peddleton by-election. He might have been under the ex-Kaiser's dinner-table when Lord Haldane communed with the "very big men" of Berlin, so precisely can he inform you what was said. Mr. Lloyd George himself probably could not tell exactly what made him declare for war in 1914. But Mr. Maxse has the whole story pat.

Still he is far from being a Jack Archer. If omniscience is his foible, he does really know a great deal. He belongs to the circle in which he that has "yaws to yaw," as the curate put it, can "yaw" all sorts of things, true and untrue; and only a little shrewdness is needed to sift the wheat from the chaff. Mr. Maxse is the son of that Admiral Maxse who used to be a prominent figure on provincial Unionist platforms twenty years or so ago. No doubt Admiral Maxse's son could himself have done well in politics had he been able to bow his neck to the yoke, but he has preferred lonely freedom to salaried servitude. In yielding to his temperament he probably acted wisely. Made to be a Bedouin in politics, he could hardly have become a sleek Arab of the bazaars. He can be content with a narrow formula, as the Bedouin with his narrow tent, but, if stuffiness possesses no terrors for him, want of liberty does. The Bedouin revels

in accidental feuds with his own people, while preserving a steady hatred for the outsider; and in the same spirit Mr. Maxse, treating anti-Radicalism as the *pièce de résistance* of his life-feast, delights in an occasional *bonne bouche* of family quarrel.

It was he who invented the mystic "B.M.G." which circulated in 1911 with something of the child-like solemnity of an old Jacobite watchword. "Balfour must go," said Mr. Maxse, and people laughed. His sling-stone seemed pitifully inadequate to the felling of a giant. Yet the giant was felled. Again, it was Mr. Maxse who fired the first, or almost the first, shot in the Marconi campaign. He was writing about the famous deal months before less courageous or less well-informed journalists touched it. He named names, dotted "i's" and crossed "t's" with superb intrepidity. For sheer courage, indeed, he has no equal. There is no beating about the bush, no "we could an if we would," or "if we list to speak," or any such ambiguous giving out. Mr. Maxse puts everything down in plain black and white, using a dialect of studied violence which is sometimes extremely effective for its purpose, but tends to fire with its perpetual over-emphasis and its excessive fluency.

One wonders sometimes how he "'scapes kill-



ing." For it is no light risk nowadays to deal critically with the mighty. There was a time when the pamphleteering bravo could say much what he liked of a Minister. There is an old story of a troublesome North Country visitor at a Riviera hotel who declined resolutely to pay thirty francs for butter he had not eaten. The staff was in a quandary. It was against all hotel-keepers' morality to waive a charge once made; on the other hand, the Englishman clearly would not pay. The tactful manager got out of the difficulty by one of those inspirations that only occur to master minds. "Put it on to the bill of the Grand Duke," he told the clerk; "I am quite sure His Highness will not mind." Such disregard for small charges was common enough among the statesmen of a few years ago. Confident of their own integrity, they cared little who assailed it from without, and they knew exactly how to deal with attacks in the House of Commons. Gladstone never brought actions for libel over the "murder" of Gordon; Parnell met *The Times* forgery by a simple denial in the House of Commons. But some modern Ministers have developed a strange sensitiveness to Press criticism, and if it cannot be dealt with by blandishments, they are quite prepared to use all the terrors of the law, criminal as well as civil. To tell the exact truth about public men

to-day is as exciting as big-game hunting, and far more expensive.

Fear of consequences, however, will certainly not silence Mr. Maxse. He may be a Quixote for his discretion, but he is certainly an Amadis for his valour. Men, wineskins, and windmills are all one to him, and he is ready for any odds. His influence, as already noted, is very considerable with the Protectionist-Jingo section of the Conservative party, and is hardly explained by the direct sway he exercises through the *National Review*, of which, it was stated some time ago, he himself writes seven-tenths. The audience reached by a monthly review is necessarily small, and Mr. Maxse's peculiar style possesses no great popular appeal. But he has a claim on the ear of one editor, and on the space of another; he can often speak when he wishes through other men's mouths; and, with his true *frondeur's* instinct for any ally that will serve his turn, he manages to reach a far larger audience than his ostensible one. On more than one occasion the energetic employment of his varied resources has undoubtedly determined more than mere personal issues; he himself has made a larger claim in regard to one most important decision of the war.

The Maxse philosophy is inherently simple, though it leads its holder into complicated courses. He is for the whole Conservative animal, and no

nonsense about it. For him Jingo is only an affectionate diminutive for St. George of Merrie England. Sometimes he may be inclined to doubt whether we can be saved at all; pessimism is the prevailing mood of his school. But he is quite certain that our only chance is undiluted Toryism. He is strongly suspicious, therefore, of the Georgian ascendancy; whoever else fails to observe the relative positions of the Prime Minister's toe and the agreed Coalition line, Mr. Maxse will not. All leaders, indeed, he watches with unsleeping suspicion. He knows they are poor, timid creatures of compromise and the half-measure, and that at any time they may be "nobbled." In the bright lexicon of Mr. Maxse there is no such adjective as "un-nobblable." Everybody is sure to be nobbled sooner or later, and then it becomes the stern duty of Mr. Maxse to get busy with his armoury. He is almost old-Japanese in his conception of what the honour of the clan demands. A mere Liberal is a foreign devil, to be slain carelessly if he comes within range of the two-handed sword; a Tory recreant is another matter; it may be years before the disembowelling knife can be commended to him without scandal to the tribe, but the watch never falters, and the victim's day duly arrives. Let Mr. George be very careful about any line he happens to have toed,

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To be quite serious, it is rather a pity that Mr. Maxse is not a little more or a little less than Mr. Maxse. He might be a more valuable public asset if he made himself the watchdog of the nation, and not of part of a party. He might be of very real value to his party, and through it to the public, if he could persuade himself to be a little less extravagant. But no man successfully combats his temperament, and Mr. Maxse is quite simply a fanatic who believes that the perfect man is the perfect Tory he is fated never to meet. But he will go on to the end looking for the perfect Tory, and rending all who disappoint after raising his hopes.

## MR. HERBERT SAMUEL

EVERYBODY knows the man who is too neat to be quite well dressed and too polite to be quite well bred. This description does not apply literally to Mr. Herbert Samuel, whose appearance and manner never swerve by a hair's-breadth from the just mean. But intellectually he represents the type in our politics.

Mr. Samuel's superlative efficiency produces something closely resembling depression. Its effect is felt very generally. Those who constitute the Opposition, for the time being, are conscious enough of it, but perhaps it does even more to dishearten those whose cause Mr. Samuel happens to be supporting with great ability. One feels somehow that it must be a defective case to need such dexterity in presentation: or, at lowest, that the case would be very feeble when stated by a less gifted advocate. A very old Liberal of the more hearty type once described to the writer the effect on him of Mr. Samuel's speaking. "I have known," he said, "some very great Parliamentary leaders—Gladstone, Bright, Chamberlain in his good period, Morley,

Harcourt. Some of them, the best, made one feel as great as themselves. Others made one feel of moderate but sufficient stature. But Samuel always makes me feel a very small person engaged in a very petty business. And I only begin really to suspect the soundness of a measure when he has supported it with twenty arguments, and I can find an answer to none."

Lord Hugh Cecil, in one of those infrequent bursts of splendid eloquence which awe an assembly unused to great rhetoric, once likened the soul of the intellectual, moral, and right-living unbeliever—it was Lord Morley he had in mind—to a splendid throne in a stately chamber. After describing all its glories of design and garniture, he ended abruptly, "But after all it is an empty room." It is perhaps this sense of the lack of something vital that gives a kind of forlornness to the mechanical perfections of Mr. Herbert Samuel. He speaks well, with less than Mr. Asquith's force, but more than Mr. Asquith's precision; no raggedness about his sentences, no fatiguing parentheses, no woolly qualifications, not a word misused or a stress out of place. But there is this difference: Mr. Asquith's is the precision of the master workman, and Mr. Samuel's of the first-class machine. Mr. Asquith, it is realised, would not argue the opposite case as well; with Mr. Samuel one feels that

with the pulling of a lever the machine would run as smoothly reversed. No doubt the feeling is unjust, but there it is.

Mr. Samuel's Ministerial manner suffered from the same mechanical certitude. His only tense was the *plus-que-parfait*. The first time he took charge of a measure he showed as much skill in dealing with critical opponents and too enthusiastic friends as if he had spent all his life at the game; thenceforward he could but repeat the miracle; and it is only human to yawn at wonders that never cease. It is a wise juggler who begins with a few ivory balls and works up gradually to the grand climax of keeping in the air five lighted lamps and the furniture of a small flat. Mr. Samuel would have found more sympathy had he broken down a little early in his career; a failure now would not do; people would only diagnose something wrong with the exhaust or the carburettor, and talk about getting a new machine. It is a very serious thing to establish such a reputation. All the negative virtues of a Minister are Mr. Samuel's. He is never hasty, never gives himself away, is impervious to rudeness, ridicule, or invective, and moves towards his object with a sort of inexorable gentleness, as of a Juggernaut car fitted with pneumatic tyres. He is never tempted to the cheap sneer. Nothing will induce him to score off friend or

foe after the manner of the young in politics. The bumptiousness which has brought more than one brilliant beginner to the ground is wholly alien from his nature. He does not tolerate fools gladly, but he accepts them as part of the scheme of things; he even shows a cold magnanimity to a more than usually stupid adversary. It is doubtful whether he ever attempted a joke; he certainly never made one; jokes are not business, and he is above all businesslike. He is patient and polite to the heckler, never declines information without a plausible reason, and generally vouchsafes a courteous if frigid word to soften the necessary rebuff. In exposition he is careful to save his audience the least trouble; few politicians are so wholly lucid; prepared for almost any extremity of human stupidity, he is patient even when he finds his worst expectations exceeded. Yet many a faithful Commoner would prefer to be called an idiot, bluntly and heartily, than listen to Mr. Samuel's "Though I am conscious of no obscurity, the honourable Member's question suggests a possibility of misunderstanding, and I will therefore make the point, if possible, even more clear."

In administration Mr. Samuel conveys an equal impression of complete and almost inhuman efficiency. He has filled several posts—Local Government Board, Post Office, Home



Office—with credit, and with his business habits and acute intellect it is easy to believe the current legend that whatever he touches is well done.

Such was Mr. Samuel as Minister. In opposition he did not quite support the reputation he made in office. The man was the same—or shall we say the machine?—but it worked a little less surely. Mr. Samuel in the last months of the last Parliament did not seem quite to have made up his mind whether to follow Mr. Asquith or to lead, say, Mr. Pringle. Hence a certain wobbling in the once exact flywheel, and just the suggestion that the lubrication was less constant. Mr. Samuel's temper, in fact, seems to have been slightly affected by memories of the changes that interrupted his career, and his criticisms of the Lloyd George Government sometimes betrayed a rather niggling and bitter tendency unusual to him. Not that his ground was ill chosen; he usually attacked the Government on its most vulnerable point—finance—and a much less able man would have had no difficulty in making out his case. It was more in spirit than in matter that his speeches contrasted with those usual to Mr. Asquith and with his own earlier manner. It would be ungenerous to suspect a man of Mr. Samuel's calibre of anything so vulgar as personal pique. But it

is probable that he really had an artist's irritation at seeing others mismanage what he knew he could do well.

Such professional pride is not unbefitting in a very professional politician. Mr. Samuel is a professional if there ever was one. His career was determined from his Balliol days; he got up politics as other industrious young men get up law or medicine, with the firm resolve to succeed mightily therein. He had only left Oxford two years when he contested South Oxfordshire, unsuccessfully, as a Liberal. After another vain assault on that division he was put in for the Cleveland Division of Yorkshire, and when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman came into power he earned the reward of undoubtedly considerable party services. It would be interesting to know on what grounds he adopted Liberal principles. The once natural tendency of Jewish politicians to Liberalism has long ceased to operate; and there is nothing in the texture of Mr. Samuel's mind to suggest any tumultuous enthusiasm for the causes which modern Radicalism professes to have at heart. But, having made his choice, he has never swerved in his allegiance or in personal loyalty to his leader. He went unhesitatingly into the cold shades with Mr. Asquith; he shared his leader's discomfiture at the polls; and, unlike his kinsman, Mr. Montagu,

has never shown the least disposition to parley with Mr. Asquith's successors.

There are some who predict for him a great future, and superficially nobody has claims more substantial. Nor does he suffer much in comparison with other possible candidates. Nearly all the men now associated with Mr. Asquith are less perfect examples of his type, and if it be objected that he lacks the temperament for a popular leader, the retort is readily forthcoming that Sir John Simon, Mr. McKenna, and Mr. Runciman are not precisely men round whom legend grows. So it is quite possible that Mr. Samuel may realise the future of which, it is said, he has dreamed almost from boyhood. The future of a Liberal party under him is another story.

## MR. HAROLD BEGBIE

It may be doubted whether there has ever been anyone quite like Mr. Harold Begbie. But he has his affinities, and they stand as far apart as Mr. William Le Queux, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, and Mr. George R. Sims. One may even detect in him traces of Mr. Guy Thorne and Mr. Charles Garvice; and, passing to the realm of fiction, one notes a solitary point of resemblance to Mr. Bob Sawyer. Like that accommodating person, Mr. Begbie is in opinion "a sort of a plaid"; and a plaid, while the easiest possible thing to recognise, is one of the most difficult to describe.

"I was thrown by fortune," says Mr. Begbie of himself, "into the ranks of the writers." He does not inform us exactly how it happened that the son of a Suffolk clergyman and the grandson of a British General enlisted in the "questionable cohort"; but Nature clearly designed him for a talker in some kind. Perhaps he would have done better (except in the worldly sense) to follow the paternal career; one cannot help feeling that a capital curate was lost to the Church when he took to journalism and literature. For

Mr. Begbie, on the evidence of a Salvation Army Colonel—he has written, by the way, a sympathetic Life of General Booth—is one of the “most spiritual-minded” of living men; and his outlook on life is not dissimilar to that of the Reverend Hopley Porter. In other circumstances it might be true of him that:

“He plays the airy flute,  
And looks depressed and blighted;  
Doves round about him toot,  
And lambkins dance delighted.”

Or, again, he might:

“In old maids’ albums, too,  
Stiok seaweed, yes, and name it.”

For the sympathies of Mr. Begbie are wide as nature, animate and inanimate. He will rhapsodise over a country sunset or the dusty trees on the Thames Embankment; he will weep over an interesting murderer; write a set of Jingo verses; pat a Bishop on the back or “write up” a hospital; come to the rescue of a woman with a problem or a politician without a place; and, in short, deal “in a spirit of love” with anything that comes his way. Like Diderot—it is his own unassuming comparison—he has “tried everything.” He has “intimate friendships with the great and the low, with the learned and the unlearned, with the fashionable and the un-

fashionable, with the good and the wicked." "Were I to make," says Mr. Begbie, "a catalogue of my friends with the great, you would either think that I had been born with a silver spoon in my mouth or that the most puissant of fairy godmothers had stood sponsor for me at the font; and if I were to make a chronicle of my friendships with the wicked and miserable, you would fly to denounce me to the police."

This interesting passage is introduced for two reasons. First, it summarises Mr. Begbie's claims to the ear of the public. Secondly, it illustrates reasonably well the literary method which has gained him a welcome in so many popular periodicals. Carlyle has described with some acerbity what he calls the "Castile soap" style of writing. You take a cubic inch of respectable Castile soap; this is your substance. You "lather it up with loquacity, joviality, commercial-inn banter, leading-article philosophy, or other aqueous vehicles," till it fills "one puncheon wine measure, the volume of four hundred pages," and say "There!" "This is the problem; let a man have credit, of his kind, for doing his problem."

Mr. Begbie deserves all credit of a kind. In one sense he may be called a master, and even a despot, of language. He calls up words by a sort of conscriptive edict, and, like so many conscriptionists, is not specially careful how he

uses them. Are they not cheap enough? It matters little that some noble substantives are put to menial use, or that five incompetent adjectives half-do the work of one "soldier-like" word. This army is not meant for fighting, mainly, and, for other things—*ça marche*. It looks a thing of "mass and charge"; there are plenty of trumpets and banners; and it goes by with a certain swing. Some stern Foch of criticism may murmur that numbers are not everything, but in Mr. Begbie's world—and the cashier's—a thousand words are a thousand words. The proportion of camp-followers to bayonets is not very material.

Still, such popularity as Mr. Begbie's—and he must be popular, or the editors do not know their business—must be based on something. That something, probably, is his unique power of sobbing. "I never see such a feller," said Sam Weller of Mr. Job Trotter. "Blessed if I don't think he's got a main in his head as is always turned on." Mr. Begbie has some such reservoir of universal sympathy close to the surface. He is "human" in the full Fleet Street sense of the word; tears well at command from his fountain pen; the aqueous elements in his composition have an infectious saltiness. "I love London," he says, "because its people are the kindest, cheerfulest, bravest, and most sentimental people

to be found under any canopy of smoke in the four corners of the globe." The last adjective is significant. It is in his sentimental appeals to the sentimental that Mr. Begbie's influence, whatever it may be, resides. He knows exactly when to put the patriotic, religious, comic, or seamy-side disc on the gramophone of his mind. He says in a multitude of words what the "nice," decent, middle-class man feels, but can find no words for. In his person shallow calls to shallow.

At bottom Mr. Begbie seems to stand for the kind of people who want to do the right thing without much personal inconvenience, who feel a thrill of renunciation when sending a small cheque to a charity, are ready for any kind of "reform" that is not "subversive," like to experience the excitement of religion without tiring themselves with the Litany, and have a general preference for equilateral triangles with three unequal sides. He is a quite English product; one could not imagine his like in France, where he who aspires to speak must mean something definite, and, if he talks nonsense, must at least talk one kind of nonsense consistently for three months together.

Mr. Begbie is to be admired as an industrious man. There is, indeed, no brighter example extant of the full use of the talent. At several



years short of fifty his collected works would fill a library. He is, perhaps, not to be scorned as an influence in some desirable directions. He breathes a certain English pleasantness and English manliness, rather in the kind of the conscientious prefect in a *Boy's Own Paper* school story: that remarkable kind of boy who is at once a good cricketer and an earnest Evangelical, keen on keeping up his average and touched with the desire to "do good." He tells the despondent to "buck up," digs the selfish in their waistcoats, confidently informs us one day that the powers of darkness are prevailing, and the next that the Millennium will arrive on Tuesday week. All this is very excellent and stimulating, like the sermons of the curate Mr. Begbie might well have been. But there are disadvantages also in such jerky simplicity. Mr. Begbie, like many newspapers, is always too topical to be abreast of the times. For ever dealing with what is "uppermost," he neglects what is underneath, and that is generally the one thing that matters.

But, above all, he and men like him, with their brisk way of disposing of great questions, tend to give a disastrous impression that what they call "reform" is a simple matter, needing nothing but "common sense" and "good-will." Here,

for instance, are the masters; here are the men; estranged by superficial quarrels: what is wanted to get them "in touch"? "Good-feeling, my dear sir; nothing more; men who have fought together in the trenches are surely not going, etc., etc." It is what Carlyle called reforming by "tremendous cheers."

"Alas, it cannot be done. Reform is not joyous, but grievous; no single man can reform himself without stern suffering and stern working; how much less can a nation of men! . . .

"Reforming a nation is a terrible business. Medea, when she made men young again, was wont to hew them in pieces with meat-axes, cast them into caldrons, and boil them for a length of time. How much handier could they but have done it by 'tremendous cheers' alone!"

A danger not to be minimised at this moment is the writer or politician of seeming gravity and essential levity, the sentimentalist who suggests that a world out of joint can be put right by anything short of the severest thought and the severest labour. The mere insignificance of what is talked and written is no measure of the mischief it may do. What is lighter than thistle-down, but what, too, more distressing for the earnest toiler on the land? Mr. Begbie means right well and no doubt has his uses. But with all his

“intensely religious spirit,” “powerful and absorbing sermons” in novel form, and “realism without offence,” it will, I imagine, strike our successors as singular that in such grave times he should fill so many columns with—in essence, what ?

## VISCOUNT ESHER

SOME years ago the late King of Prussia and German Emperor described Lord Esher as a man fit to look after the drains and foundations of a Royal palace, but not to express opinions on high policy.

This criticism only shows that William II., despite his intimate connection with England, really knew very little about us. The Emperor, of course, founded his sneer on the fact that Lord Esher was once Secretary to His Britannic Majesty's Board of Works, which, in fact, is charged with the business of looking after drains and foundations among other things. Now in Prussia such a functionary would probably be a noble, if not what we call a lord. But he would be expected to understand drains and foundations, and he would not be expected to talk confidently about anything else. In England, on the other hand, as the German Emperor should have known quite well, an important position at the Office of Works need not necessarily imply on the part of its holder any knowledge of drains and foundations. Such knowledge might possibly exist; but

it would not be obligatory, and, if existent, would either be concealed or acknowledged with a blush. It is not our soldiers alone who delight in mufti, and are quick to resent the suspicion of "shop." In high officialdom also the amateur status is valued. But such a man might easily be an authority on all sorts of outside subjects, from army commands to old masters, and might exercise a great, but ill-defined, influence in more than one quarter.

It was, therefore, a coarse Prussian error to assume, first, that Lord Esher knew anything of the gross details of his ostensible work, and, secondly, that his views on other subjects were negligible. Lord Esher, in fact, represents a type almost peculiar to this country; a man who goes everywhere and knows everybody, who is understood to be important, and yet has no recognised status proportionate to his prestige. On the surface, he is nothing in particular. To be sure, he is a Viscount, but there are many Viscounts, and every year sees more of them; and one really cannot be impressed by a Knighthood of Justice of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem or the Second Class of the Spanish Order of Merit. He has done nothing in particular. True, he has occupied positions which might have been filled by quite first-class men. For example, he was Chairman of the War Office

Reconstitution Committee, which sat in 1904, and he is a permanent member of the Committee of Imperial Defence. But if you were to inquire precisely what he had done to justify selection you would have to be content with somewhat vague answers. On the literary side we have rather more definite achievement. Lord Esher edited the correspondence of Queen Victoria, and has produced several rather slight original works concerning royalty and statesmanship.

Altogether his is a career which, however useful and creditable, does not explain adequately why Lord Esher should assume the character of a sort of unofficial adviser to the English people. His political record was quite undistinguished; most people have forgotten that he sat for Falmouth in the eighties, and was private secretary to the Duke of Devonshire. His connection with soldiering rather suggests Mr. Alfred Jingle's participation in the Revolution of July: "Fired a musket—fired with an idea—rushed into wine-shop—wrote it down—back again—whizz-bang—another idea—wine-shop again—pen and ink—back again—bang the field-piece—twang the lyre." Not that there is anything lyrical about Lord Esher; but the flow of ideas is certainly there, and they are received by the British public with true Pickwickian solemnity. For Lord Esher is reserved that privilege only conceded to the great,

a large-type column in *The Times* whenever he chooses to claim it. Leader-writers call attention to his "notable review" of some "situation" or other in an adjoining column. The purveyors of gossip refer to him whenever he bobs up, and, failing to find anything very thrilling about the Viscount personally, trail off into irrelevancies concerning the former Miss Zena Dare, his daughter-in-law. In short, there is a very general impression in many circles that Lord Esher is somebody, and nobody seems to be able to say quite what sort of somebody he is. He is not a very great nobleman, or a very great landowner, or a very great writer, or a very great anything. But there seems to be a notion that he stands for something much more important than the son of a late Master of the Rolls.

The present writer is content to state the mystery without trying to fathom it. Indeed, the way of an eagle in the air or a snake on the rock is not more occult. But a hint may perhaps be taken from a little book which Lord Esher thought it worth while to publish some time ago. Discussing, among other matters, the position of the Crown in English life, he remarks that the King is not a power but an influence. Possibly that is Lord Esher's own ambition. Possibly he wishes to be an influence, a sort of atmosphere, a circumambient Esher, so to speak. If not

great himself, his familiarity with the great is wonderful. "I have spoken with every Minister engaged in the war," he used to say, in the course of his criticisms, "and they were all wrong on such and such a point." "At so and so," he remarked, "I was told so and so." Every communication of his to the Press had this note of exclusive and first-hand information. It is perhaps permissible to wonder how it arrived that Lord Esher was the recipient of so many confidences; perhaps even more permissible to wonder how he came to speak of them in public. Are we to understand that every statesman and soldier discussed his plans with Lord Esher? Or is Lord Esher merely a super-Boswell with larger opportunities? Neither character seems wholly congruous with an official standing dignified, but not specially noteworthy. Neither would be wholly satisfactory from the public's point of view. If Lord Esher has really qualities which fit him to be an influence in public affairs, he might perhaps be induced to display them on a public stage. If he has no such qualities, the natural reflection of the public is on the whole that of the ex-Kaiser. If his job is drains and foundations, let him look after drains and foundations.

Lord Esher, however, seems to be less occupied with the material than with the moral founda-



tions of Windsor Castle, and in the little book to which reference has been made he takes upon himself, greatly daring, the wholly unnecessary task of defending royal institutions in this country. The dark suspicion that his lordship may be a furtive republican crosses the mind as one glances over his arguments in favour of monarchy. For they are the kind of arguments of which the best causes die. A judicious champion would not, for example, dwell too lovingly on the period when Baron Stockmar was a power, or gloat over Prince Albert "toning down" foreign despatches, and routing "powerful Ministers and ebullient Parliaments." More grateful to modern susceptibilities are the tributes paid to King Edward and the present wearer of the Crown. But Lord Esher surely misunderstands the workers to whom he appeals when he claims that "*an arbiter elegantiarum* is as necessary to the English people as a conductor to an orchestra." The English people undoubtedly have great respect and warm affection for the Royal Family, and recognise the many real advantages of our monarchical system. But the great mass think of the King first as the chief magistrate of the State, and secondly as a human and lovable figure. He never fills their vision as the first chapter in Burke's "Poerage."

Lord Esher, who "does not share faith in

democracy as a form of government," feelingly deprecates the unconsidered sweeping away of "institutions deeply rooted in historic soil." He mentions that during discussion of these subjects with a working-man friend of twenty-five years' standing, this highly favoured proletarian pointed to an ancient tabard hanging on the wall, and said, "We shall care for old historic influences, as you care for that, as a thing of beauty, but obsolete." The whole modern criticism of the Peerage is surely the precise opposite of this humble friend's of Lord Esher. The Peerage is not wholly a thing of beauty, and it is very far from obsolete. Neither the lords who sell their pictures nor the lords who buy their titles represent any splendid but dying tradition; both are very much alive and not at all moss-grown. If there should be a popular movement to get rid of institutions for which Lord Esher pleads, it would not be inspired by any vandalistic passion against the harmless and graceful antique. It would come of a most practical fear of something very new and very strong, which aims at making the world safe for plutocracy.

## LORD ERNLE

It is stated that when Mr. Lloyd George was looking for a Minister of Agriculture someone suggested Mr. R. E. Prothero. The Prime Minister's eyes lighted with memories of the Budget controversy. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "the man I called the Duke of Bedford's butler, or something of that sort. The very person I want." And thus one of the fiercest critics of Mr. Lloyd George the Chancellor of the Exchequer became subordinate and ally to Mr. Lloyd George the Prime Minister.

Lord Ernle, as he now is, was never a butler. Perhaps no man in politics ever looked less like one. The son of a Canon, he has inherited much of the atmosphere of the Establishment. His thin, finely chiselled, clean-shaven face and white hair would go well with apron and gaiters; his style of speaking embraces equally the ecclesiastical comminatory and the ecclesiastical benedictory; and when he approaches his peroration you are almost surprised that he does not say, "Just one word more before we part." Nor is his churchiness limited to externals. The sons of

the clergy are not generally noted for their addiction to the paternal "shop." Lord Ernle is the exception. His literary output, to adapt Mr. Micawber's description of Canterbury, is "a happy admixture of the ecclesiastical and the agricultural." He has written a book on "The Psalms in Human Life," an altogether excellent book, perhaps the best on the subject in the English language. He has also produced two works on Dean Stanley, and several treatises on farming.

Marlborough was his school, and Balliol his college; he has been called to the Bar; he edited the *Quarterly Review* for five years; he has served on a Royal Commission, and had contested a Bedfordshire constituency before he became Lord Hugh Cecil's colleague in the representation of Oxford University. To call a man with this record the Duke of Bedford's butler is to carry the licence of political satire to excessive lengths. The position Lord Ernle actually occupied was that of agent-in-chief to the Duke. It is not perhaps altogether easy for the ordinary man to understand how a person of Lord Ernle's many accomplishments could accept any kind of personal service, however distinguished his employer. But in the case of very large estates the sense of personal servitude is not vivid. Forty thousand rich English acres are equivalent to many a

small principality, and the agent-in-chief has more than the emolument and a part of the dignity of some Prime Ministers. The President of the Swiss Republic, for example, is probably a much poorer man, and almost certainly a much humbler man, than most people in Lord Ernle's position.

I have always thought there is too little sympathy for the young man who "went away sorrowfully, for he had great possessions." It may easily have been true that the great possessions had him; that they determined his life for him, irrespective of his private views. Certainly in modern times preposterously rich men, or comparatively poor men with preposterously large estates, are the slaves of their belongings. You or I can go into a greenhouse and freely cut a bunch of grapes, because we look after the greenhouse ourselves, or at best employ a single gardener. But when my lord of many millions wants some orchids, the twenty-first undergardener touches his hat, and says he'll "mention it" to the head-gardener, who in all probability will decline to part with the best blooms, which he is reserving for the Horticultural Show. No man with more than a moderate income can be said to be free. It is unfair to regard a Duke as an individual. He is really a Caste Trust. In the relative insignificance of the product we

forget the wonderful extent and complexity of the machinery. We see a rather clumsy young man, who talks halting nonsense in the House of Lords and fluent slang in the weighing-room at a steeplechase meeting; who throws away thousands in gambling and deducts five shillings from the allowance of some old servant who has reached his seventieth birthday and his old age pension; who gives a dinner party at which "the flowers alone ran into four figures," and defies the deferent suggestion of a sanitary authority that he should abate the indecency of his slum property—we note all this, and marvel at the inconsistency of ducal nature. The Duke may quite possibly prefer a chop to a French dinner, delight in flinging away money in miscellaneous *largesse*, and be a liberal patron of some charity for the support of decayed footmen. But the Duke is generally the least important fact about the dukedom. It is forgotten that behind the individual, sometimes very human and very foolish, is something very astute and occasionally very inhuman, a kind of small county council, with a whole hierarchy of lawyers, rent-collectors, and agents, as cold as civil servants, and generally much keener. It was such a hierarchy of which Lord Ernle was the head.

On the face of things the appointment of this scholarly man was a good one. He knew a great

deal about land, was an excellent judge of a certain kind of good farming, and might well appear supremely qualified for the difficult and delicate task of restoring British agriculture to something like its old position in the national economy. Unfortunately the Prime Minister made no allowance for two facts. In the first place, Lord Ernle had been long associated with a particular interest. He was a landlord's man, thinking in the terms of landlordism, and personally, as well as professionally, inclined to the landlords' rather contemptuous and sceptical view of any system of culture opposed to the tradition of the last few hundred years. Secondly, he was above everything a pessimist; pessimism was the very stuff of him. We all know the expert who labours with great acuteness and conviction to prove that things cannot be done, and is rather disappointed when they are done in the face of his advice. Lord Ernle was precisely that kind of expert. Overborne here by circumstances, there by the will of his chief, he yet hugged (as if it were something precious) the assurance that grim experience would at long last confound all the sanguine expectations of the enthusiasts for food production. Not that Lord Ernle was unsympathetic. His sympathies, if anything, were too extensive and too readily engaged. He sympathised with the nobleman

whose park it might be proposed to plough up. He sympathised with the farmer who found difficulty with the controller, and with the controller who found difficulty with the farmer. He left everybody with whom he came in contact under the impression that their troubles were his single preoccupation, and that life must continue bitter to him until these troubles were relieved.

But sympathy that knows no end also knows no very practical beginning; if, like Mother Nature, one sympathises equally with the wolf and the lamb, the lamb will not feel any excessive gratitude: it is more likely to feel simultaneously the wolf's teeth and the satire of such sympathy. It is not surprising, therefore, that Lord Ernle, after a time, failed both to satisfy the Do-Nothings and to win the confidence of the Do-Somethings. Something, however, was done, despite all; Lord Ernle was at the head of the Board while it was done; and nobody is likely to grudge him the peerage he richly earned, if only by suffering for many months an excessive lowness of spirits. Running with the hare and hunting with the hounds is, after all, a depressing as well as an exhausting form of sport, and Lord Ernle did well, at his time of life, to give it up. There must always be an unwholesome strain on a Duke's agent placed in charge of a "democratic" land settlement policy.



WHELAN AND  
MILSON

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all play-acting, of course, but a great deal of it was. The Leader of the Opposition did not really believe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a financial Attila, but he thought it a neat thing to say, and said it. What he really meant was that certain wealthy contributors to the funds of his party thought a particular tax extremely unpleasant. And when a great orator on the other side declared that the Bill in his charge aimed at freeing "democracy" for ever from the shackles of feudalism he had no very clear idea of what feudalism was, or democracy, or freedom. But he had a very clear idea of how things of that kind would read in the popular papers the next day, and how they would be quoted on by-election platforms next week.

Given a cheering mob of members after dinner, given a stirring set of Front Bench speeches in which at least the element of personal rivalry is very real, given, further, the forty-five millions of Carlyle's majority in the background, this sort of game has its own impressiveness. One might have a private opinion of the futility of the business, and yet, watching the wind-up of a "great" debate, with its atmosphere of tense excitement, one had to be strong-minded indeed to resist the general illusion that government must be carried on this way and not otherwise. But now people who stray into the House of

Commons, and people who read debates in the papers, see the party game as not even a game: it is only a joke, and a feeble one at that. For the whole merit of the old Parliamentary game lay in the skill of the chief players and the comparative equality of the opposing teams. Now the players are at best mediocre, and one famous team is represented by a few disconsolate survivors. Sir Donald Maclean leads a handful of Liberals starving for principle (and very cross about it); Mr. Adamson a larger body of Labour men ravening for interest. The Independent Liberal party is a noun of multitude signifying not many, and William Adamson is a quite proper noun signifying not much. Only one touch was needed to complete the farce of Opposition on party lines in a Parliament elected on a negation of party; and that touch was, happily, not wanting. The moment the time came for the official Opposition to say its say the great question was precipitated—which was the official Opposition? Was it a question of numbers or of quality? Up rose Sir Donald MacLean and Mr. Adamson, with a click, for all the world like the little things on a whist-marker (save that they erected themselves to score points not yet made), the one claiming precedence because he represented what Liberalism had been, the other because he stood for what Labour hoped to be. This

little problem of etiquette has been, happily, settled by the Speaker in a Solomonic judgment; the lawyer knight and the Lanark miner exercise in turns the privileges of Leader of the Opposition: rather after the fashion of those old German clocks where the little man comes out to-day and the little woman to-morrow.

On the whole, the position of Sir Donald Maclean is the less enviable. Like those faithful knights who were dressed up as the King for the sole purpose of being killed in his stead, he has the pang without the crown of the martyr. A fugitive Alfred is melancholy enough; but he is still the King if he can only get back his kingdom. But in the ears of Sir Donald every gust of the wind of adversity whistles *Sic vos non vobis*. In such circumstances he does manfully enough. It must be admitted that, granting the thing to be worth doing, he does it (to use the cautious idiom of his countrymen) not so badly. But then Sir Donald is far too Scottish to do anything badly—perhaps too Scottish also to do any one thing supremely well. He is Scottiest of Scots; did not his father come from the still-vexed Hebrides? He is also a solicitor high in repute in Cardiff. The combination is fatal to inefficiency, and Sir Donald has shown himself efficient in everything he has handled. As Chairman of the Final Appeal Tribunal he nearly touched

perfection: painstaking and just, human without blubber, and feeling without sickliness, he won general respect and confidence as holding a sane balance between the rights of the citizen and the claims of the State. As Deputy-Chairman of Committee he knows the House to the bottom, and has the stoicism, no doubt painfully acquired, that shrinks from no extremity of boredom. In that he has an advantage over his exiled chief; Mr. Asquith came to speak, and, if he remained, did so only to scoff. Sir Donald's handsome presence helps him, too; he is one of those pleasantly stately, fresh, clean-shaven men who look all their age in dignity and all their carefully preserved youth in alertness.

Mr. Adamson is also very Scottish in many ways: in his wounding accent, for example, and his unwillingness to give himself away, which is perhaps fortunate, since there is in some respects not enough of him to be lavish with. He is probably better in counsel than in speech; his set orations smell much of the midnight oil, and his incursions into the classic suggest rather the miscellaneous loot of a moss-trooper than the lawful possessions of a peaceful cultivator. Like that countryman of his who refused gold (it was a very long time ago), demanding "white money" that anybody would take, he seems to know no distinction between the highest and lowest in

intellectual currency. In one of his most deeply meditated speeches he quoted Mr. Bryan's "Man-kind must not be crucified on a cross of gold" much as if it were part of the Sermon on the Mount, whereas in fact it was merely a flying spark struck out of a now forgotten controversy in the United States; a thing as transient and local as could well be.

Lack of proportion is, indeed, a general fault of Mr. Adamson. He divides the nation too sharply into two classes: miners and people not worth considering (except for income tax and expropriation purposes). It is carrying simplification to extremes. After all there were others who have done things, as the shade of Noah is alleged to have remarked to a newly arrived American ghost, who boasted that in the great Mississippi floods of 1903 he went out on a raft and saved twenty-three lives.

## LORD ROBERT CECIL

IN a former volume, compiled at a time when the cult of the business man was at its height, I expressed some doubt as to the political competence of most of Mr. Lloyd George's recruits and ventured the remark that of all the new men in the Government Lord Robert Cecil was the only one to suggest large possibilities.

The business men have since mostly disappeared. The moment they left the Government they were forgotten; it would be hard, at this time, to recall even the names of most of the strong, silent imitators of Cincinnatus who left their cash registers to save their country. Lord Robert Cecil, on the other hand, is a much more notable figure out of office than in. During the hustle of the war most of his colleagues were far too rich to do him reverence; and he himself only very imperfectly understood the uses of advertisement. He did his job, and did it well; if not actually indispensable, he could hardly be dispensed with while it lasted. Thus he survived all changes in the two Coalitions, and gained increasing respect in a small but influential circle,

but was never popularly suspected of having won the war, or even any considerable part of it. When he resigned his office, on the rather remote issue of the Welsh Church, Sir Leo Chiozza Money also found it impossible (on quite other grounds) to support the reconstituted Coalition. The one secession was received almost as calmly as the other: Lord Robert was known to be faddy on Church questions, and in any case what did it matter? Mr. Bonar Law stood where he did. Mr. Long was as willing as Barkis. The dreadful possibility that Mr. Hayes Fisher might create a schism had been successfully met. With these substantial supports in place, so slender a party pillar as Lord Robert was clearly dispensable.

In another sense, however, Lord Robert was less easily to be spared. The public soon learned that, though not a Minister, he was to take part in the Peace Conference, and after a while it began to realise that a politician had quietly developed into a statesman. The miracle was not announced in Sinaitic thunders and lightnings, but every well-informed person who returned from Paris spoke of the solid work Lord Robert was doing, and attributed mainly to him the rapidity with which the League of Nations was being converted from a loose phrase to a coherent entity. It was whispered that, if President



Wilson could claim the honour of parentage, the labours of nursing the baby devolved on others, and chiefly on the British delegation. Lord Robert Cecil's work, done almost in stealth, has now found some degree of fame. It has been acknowledged by the Prime Minister. It has been warmly applauded by the leaders of the Labour party. It has even drawn upon its author that kind of opprobrium which is the most sincere form of compliment. Lord Robert has been publicly denounced as a "traitor" by the same people who regard Mr. Bottomley as an inspired prophet.

It is permissible to hope that Lord Robert has now definitely emerged from the tadpole stage in which his gifted brother (as well as a brother less gifted) still lingers. Of his ability there was never any question; of his honesty there was even less; his sense of proportion was (and perhaps is still) more doubtful. I do not refer here to that attachment to the Church which many find merely bigoted and obstructionist. True, it is difficult to treat with serious respect some of the methods the Cecil brothers have adopted in defence of the threatened ark; it might be as logical, for the sake of the holy mysteries, to linger in the lobby as to be eaten by lions, but it cannot be said to be equally impressive. Still, faith of any kind is respectable,

and honesty is not so common in politics that we can afford to pick and choose according to our exact taste. The Cecil attitude to Church questions is by no means negligible. It is, indeed, of enormous importance, as definitely excluding Lord Robert from development on certain lines which otherwise he might possibly have followed. But it cannot be profitably discussed; one might as well indulge in speculation as to what would happen if there were no force of gravitation.

Of more practical interest is the question how far the traditional Toryism of the Cecils in other matters has been modified in Lord Robert by experiences of the last few years. The larger horizon, clearly, he surveys more in the spirit of his ancestor Burleigh than of the great Victorian statesman, his father. He is, like the Elizabethan, all for caution; more conscious of the perils than the glories of foreign adventure. As a statesman he sees the futility of arrangements founded on mere force; as a Christian he rejects the "jungle theory" of international relations; as a man of sense he rebels against that new fashion of secular Calvinism which assumes that war is the resultant of forces independent of the human will; as a lawyer he is convinced of the real importance of getting nations, like individuals, to recognise (even if they do not always obey) another law than that

of might. His faith in the League of Nations is not that of the sentimentalist who believes that a lifelong reprobate is to be "converted" by a tract; it is that of the quite practical man who knows that the average of mankind do roughly what is expected of them; that if the point of honour is assault and battery on the smallest provocation, then assaults will be frequent; but that if, on the other hand, violence without great justification is generally condemned, manners will inevitably grow milder. The extraordinarily rapid extinction of duelling in England is a case in point. It followed immediately on the entrance of the middle classes into political power. It was a serious nuisance to people of Mr. Winkle's condition to be called out for a speech or an interjection in the House of Commons; and as people of Mr. Winkle's condition became dominant they established the convention that duelling was equally wicked and ridiculous. Within twenty years this convention had far more than the force of law, and none adhered to it with more fidelity than those very classes which once supplied all the fire-caters. Lord Robert Cecil relies on a similar but wider modification of public opinion to effect what so many previous attempts have failed to achieve, largely because the persons most responsible for making wars were not those who felt their worst effects.

Such a faith and such a philosophy in regard to international affairs would obviously tend, if Lord Robert Cecil ultimately attained the leadership of the Conservative party, to rid it of the suspicion of Jingoism, while in no way affecting its traditional enthusiasm for the development of Greater Britain. Such a party would probably be better fitted than any existing combination to deal with the very delicate questions which must arise in the new Imperial integration which far-sighted men see to be inevitable. In domestic politics also Lord Robert Cecil gives hints of a spirit more hopeful than that of latter-day Conservatism. It is significant that, while few men have truckled less to Labour, few enjoy more fully the respect of the more responsible representatives of the working classes. They respect his honesty, they admire his capacity, and they feel that his sympathy with their class is the more likely to be genuine because he does not pretend to be other than he is. In the long run the man to win most influence with the common people of England is he who tells them no lies, and is ready even to accuse them when they lie. Such influence is within the reach of Lord Robert Cecil if he does not allow independence to degenerate into irresponsibility, or honest conviction into mere bigotry.

## MR. SPEAKER

A SORT of Providence seems to watch over the House of Commons in the matter of electing a Speaker. By the nature of things the man it elevates to the Chair is seldom one who has made any great mark in the House. The choice is limited to partisans. There is no sort of guarantee that the kind of man likely to be chosen for his knowledge of the ways of the House and his interest in precedent and punctilio will also develop what is most necessary in the Speakership, strength of character and that curious ability to create an atmosphere which is the gift of many commonplace men, and is denied to many men of the very highest talent.

It is that quality mainly which distinguishes the successful from the unsuccessful schoolmaster, and the specially strong from the merely learned judge. Mr. Speaker is a schoolmaster without the advantage of superior age and the power of the switch; he is a judge whose sentences have little more than moral terrors. A more than usual degree of the mysterious power to impress without self-assertion is, therefore, essential to

him. It is not so much a question of personality as of the absence of it. The best Speaker is he who makes himself simply the Chair, who is as much a part of the furniture of the House as the Mace and the despatch boxes, and is accepted as unquestioningly as they are. A Speaker of vivid character would almost certainly be a very bad Speaker. But at the same time the post demands mental qualities of a considerable kind, great alertness, sagacity, subtlety, the power of quick decision on all sorts of knotty points, the power also of stating complicated propositions in lucid and convincing form. The possibilities of a mistaken choice are so great that it is surprising that on the whole the Commons choose their man so well.

Mr. James William Lowther, by common acknowledgment, has amply justified the confidence reposed in his qualities fourteen years ago. There is no subject on which the faithful Commons are so unanimous as on the merits of Mr. Speaker. They have a most composite and complete admiration for him. They take delight in his dignified bearing and the handsome appearance he makes in a full-bottomed wig; it is the sort of pleasure one gets from seeing a fine piece of Chippendale or a Velasquez portrait in the right sort of room. They respect him for his strong English common sense, which seldom or

never deserts him. They marvel at his impartiality; of course, the very essence of the business is to be free from bias, but impartiality such as that shown by Mr. Lowther is extremely rare. And, finally, they have much regard for him as a man, and as the diffuser of a sort of impersonal pleasantness which goes very far on occasion to disperse storm clouds.

The Speaker is a kindly despot, and has the redeeming virtue of all despots, kindly or otherwise, that he is no respecter of persons as persons; his respect for them as institutions is, perhaps, another question. He will rule against the gods of the Treasury Bench, when they offend against technicalities, as readily as against Mr. King or Mr. Pemberton Billing. He is perfectly fair and courteous to those whose opinions he must personally detest, and no absolute monarch was ever so indifferent to the claims of mere rank and wealth. Again it may be said that it is the business of a Speaker to care for none of those things; but there have been, in fact, Speakers more than suspected of being far from indifferent to great money and social status. In Mr. Lowther's case the perfect confidence of the Labour wing is perhaps the most remarkable testimony to his official superiority to any class feeling. Labour members know perfectly well that on most subjects he must heartily loathe

their sentiments, but they know also that they always get perfect justice at his hands. Justice, but no more; there is favour for none. Once the boundary between order and disorder is passed, the rebuke, good-natured if possible, stern if necessary, follows automatically, be the offender a member of three months' or thirty years' standing. Mr. Speaker is extremely ready with his discipline; perhaps the fact that he is a fine swordsman explains the rapidity of his strokes and the sureness with which he pinks a fallacy or cuts down an irrelevant bore.

Heredity no doubt counts for much in Mr. Lowther's perfect manifestation of the Parliamentary spirit. The Lowthers were Parliamentarians long before the Cavendishes and Cecils. One sat in the Parliament of 1305, and, as Macaulay says, "the representation of Westmorland was almost as much one of the hereditaments of the Lowther family as Lowther Hall." The qualities of the race have not greatly varied from one generation to another, and there is in the present Speaker much of the John Lowther who became first Earl of Lonsdale just after the Revolution. The Stuart statesman's portrait reveals the same handsome and marked profile. His abilities, we are told, were respectable; his time was divided between respectable labours and respectable pleasures; and, like Mr. Speaker, he



was passionately devoted to his garden. On the whole it is a solid, shrewd, quarter-sessions kind of mind that runs through the Lowthers; they are moderate, practical men, not in the least brilliant; well satisfied to let things remain as they are, but by no means blind to the necessity of occasional change. It is a mind not to be despised, but perhaps the chief weakness of our political system is that it has been overrated at the expense of elements that also have their due value.

It is this fundamental conservatism, perhaps, which permits of the only criticism which may be preferred against Mr. Lowther's conduct of the Chair. His impartiality as regards persons is astonishing; but he is perhaps a little too prone to favour institutions. And one rapidly consolidating institution is the divine right of Ministers.

Mr. Speaker, for example, has occasionally shown a tendency to discourage questions dealing with the private business interests of Ministers: a matter surely of immense importance in these days of the enthroned business man. It may be painful to men in public service to have it suggested that their public acts may be affected by their investments, but is it not better that a hundred malicious and unfounded attacks should be made than that a jealous vigilance should be in any degree relaxed? Every year

sees further limitation of criticism outside the House of Commons; our absurd law of libel, absurdly interpreted, makes really searching newspaper criticism extremely dangerous, while at the same time the independence of the Press is impaired through a hundred subtle influences; and in these circumstances the constantly increasing invasion of the old liberties of question time is rather a serious matter.

It may be only the natural growth of tendency, but the fact is possibly in some degree connected with the same general attitude of the Speaker, that during his reign the Parliamentary machine has become more and more machine-like. The suppression of the private member as a force has gone on continuously during these last thirteen years. The Speaker's eye has more and more narrowed its range to the small number of persons whom the Whips deem worthy to "get on their legs." The attendance on all but great occasions has grown thinner and thinner. The man with a purpose has felt more crushed than ever before with the sense of his helplessness in face of the great mill. The man with a purpose is doubtless a bore; can he possibly be a greater bore than the Minister who chops anew thrice-chopped straw? It is not Mr. Speaker's fault that the House of Commons is anæsthetised by rules he had no part in making; but it must be

confessed that he is a first-class practitioner with the chloroform bottle.

In brief, Mr. Lowther is perhaps as good a Speaker as the House of Commons could have, the House of Commons being what it is. But what if the House of Commons were the real talking-shop of the nation, discussing things the nation wants discussed and Ministers want ignored? Well, the job would not be an enviable one for anybody, and certainly no man made in Mr. Lowther's image would dream of taking it.

## THE GERMAN IN PEACE

MANY students of the German people always declared that they would prove as submissive in final defeat as they were arrogant in early victory. This view has been largely justified by events. So long as bluff promised results, the German bluffed. He vowed he would never accept what he called a peace of violence. He threatened that, if hard pressed, he would thaw and resolve himself into the dew of Bolshevism. He uttered menaces of vengeance unspeakable hereafter. But when no better could be, he signed the Peace Treaty, and responsible German statesmen lay stress on their intention to observe it. They even talk with a singular humility about their ambition to recover the good opinion of the outside world by hard work and honest policy.

Assuredly it would be foolish to accept such professions without question, but we may be making as coarse a mistake if we assume them to come of conscious hypocrisy. We shall misjudge the German now, as we misjudged him before the war, if we allow our vision to be dis-

torted by prejudice. Five years ago we were under the dominion of a curious illusion. Most people accepted the fashionable pseudo-scientific view that the Englishman was only a variety of German, and that the two national characters were fundamentally similar. It is not necessary here to delve into the origins of this superstition; the cant is fairly modern; Shakespeare, while very sure that he was English, had no notion of being Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, or dolichocephalic. A consequence of the easy and, indeed, almost rapturous acceptance of German pedantry on this subject was that the German was never seen in a dry light. Those who liked and trusted him, and those who both distrusted and disliked, agreed in one respect: each looked on him as a sort of Englishman. The matter may be roughly summarised by saying that the Liberal regarded Bothmann-Hollweg as a German Asquith and the Conservative thought of Tirpitz as a German Nelson. This fallacy was the parent of many misconceptions. It is possible that mistakes as gross will arise from the assumption that in defeat the German will act, not like a German, but like a Frenchman, an Englishman, or a Spaniard. The one thing now needful is to get rid of all subjective disturbance, and try to see the German as he is.

That, of course, is no easy matter. Generalisa-

tions as to any nation are dangerous, and generalisations as to an assemblage of tribes (for that is really what "Germany" is) are especially untrustworthy. There are, however, one or two broad truths concerning the Germanic peoples which should have helped us to avoid our past mistakes and may be of some use in divining the future. The first and most important fact about them is their political incapacity. Under the rule of a brilliant dynasty, or under the discipline of a masterful alien race, the German tribes have shown themselves capable of great things. But the moment the pressure is removed centrifugal influences proclaim themselves, and within a few years a powerful Empire has become a mere political expression. German history has the lack of continuity which makes the annals of Asia so wearisome and perplexing. It may be summarised as an alternation of wild dissipation and periods of sick headache; the intoxication generally lasts half a century, and the uneasy tossings under the blankets may endure for two or three centuries. The great Prussian experiment was in essence an exact counterpart of the many previous attempts to bind the loose and shifting Germanic body into one organism, and the brilliant success of that experiment, up to a certain point, was due to the fact that the motive power was not purely German. For the Prussian,

the least generally gifted as well as the least German of all the Teutonic tribes, had a quality denied to the rest of the race. He could rule and he could organise. The rule was harsh and unsympathetic; the organisation was wooden and rigid; but, such as it was, it offered far greater elements of permanence than the purely personal authority of the earlier tribal leaders.

This political incapacity, proved by the records of two thousand years, seems to derive from two features of the German character—its astonishing docility and its proneness to enthusiasm and emotional excess. It is not surprising that theories concerning the “herd instinct” came from Germany, for every German does belong, as no other human being does, to a herd. (In no other part of the earth, it can be safely said, was there a society to promote the bestowal of the name of Wilhelm on male babies.) It is, I think, significant that the German word for enthusiasm may be literally translated “Swarmery”—the temper of a crowd. The docility of the German enables the herd to keep together so long as the obvious leader remains obvious; but the enthusiasm of the German is a danger to the herd when the leadership becomes uncertain; parts of the herd are apt to rush, Gadarene fashion, down steep places into Particularism and Anarchy. There must have been

many times in the history of Europe when rulers of other countries envied the ease with which this great mass of men was moved by a single will. Louis XIV. at the height of his power never had the unquestioning obedience yielded to some of the German Cæsars; there were always epigrams to modify his despotism. But the weakest French ruler was never reduced, like other Holy Roman Emperors, to borrow the price of a few weeks' lodging in Rome, because he could not command a man, a horse, or a stiver in all his titular dominion.

The whole question of the future is how these two German characteristics, with all their potentialities of strength as well as weakness, can be adjusted. If the directing power fails, we may see an anarchy in Germany such as has often reigned there after the collapse of a power as haughty as that of the Hohenzollern. If the directing power suffices there may ensue half a century or more of the sort of meekness which Herr Bauer and others inculcate. Many things would be less surprising; when the German docility and the German enthusiasm run on parallel lines the results can be very extraordinary. We have just seen how the whole nation was inoculated with the worship of force and fraud; but it is not so long ago that it was fascinated by a dreamy philosophy. The pork butcher who



deemed it his duty to be on familiar terms with the Absolute was only the grandfather of the sausage king of Frankfort who believed in nothing but Weltmacht and Real-politik. Such miracles may easily be repeated, and to the cult of the German Michael as world-conqueror may succeed that of the same Michael as God-appointed world-servant. One race of professors taught the "biological necessity" of war and the sanctity of racial arrogance; another can as easily proclaim the doctrine of survival by work, and conquest by humility.

It would be rash to dogmatise on matters so doubtful. But it may be suggested that those observers who look forward with some concern to the competition of the German peoples in industry have a stronger justification than those who apprehend an early return to the spirit of Bernhardi and the policy of Bismarck. That spirit no doubt will revive, and that policy return, when the German tribes approach their next period of intoxication, and find a due leader of the revels. But the devil sick—if only with sick-headache—is really for the time being a devil reformed, and is apt to go great lengths in the matter of piety. The Reventlows and Westarps may rage, but they seem less the authentic voice of present-day Germany than the Bauers and Maximilian Hardens. The note of the latter is

not an attractive note. It suggests less the "Peccavi" of the Christian penitent than the "I can do it on my head" of the captured criminal. But it may have a sincerity as well as a philosophy wholly German.